

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS**



IIPA SILVER JUBILEE

# ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

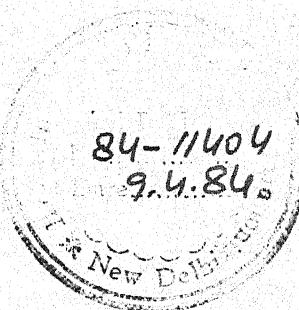
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## **Series Editor's Introduction**

Administrative reforms have always remained a major concern for all kinds of government at all times. Since the emergence of the modern industrialised and bureaucratic states in the 19th century, the governments have increasingly paid attention to evolve better processes and techniques for accomplishing their set purposes. Even countries which came under the colonial rule had to undergo continuous reform efforts in their administrative structure either to suit the needs of the colonial power or to respond to some minor concessions made by it to the growing aspirations of the indigenous population for self-government. The process of administrative reforms gained increased momentum once these erstwhile colonies had attained independence, largely because of their desire to develop administrative capacity to meet the growing challenges of socio-economic and political development.

Perhaps no other country in the developing world has seen such spate of administrative reforms as India did. The entire process of development hinges on the capability and adequacy of the administrative institutions and those who man them. Besides, the very process of nation building in a developing society is largely conditioned by the attitude, approach and resilience of the administrative system. Even in the British times, there had been a time-honoured practice of setting up prestigious committees and commissions to study particular areas of administration and to make recommendations for future development. The years after independence have been testing time for public administration in India. In an attempt to find ways of coping with more and more work of varying and complex types in the democratic context, the administrators in this country had to pay greater attention to the problems of maintaining the efficiency of the administrative system to the optimum level and to develop new capabilities to meet the challenges of the time, particularly those relating to developmental needs and aspirations of the people. The nature of changes in the administrative set-up, methods and procedures which were introduced on the basis of recommendations of committees/commissions, distinguished foreign and Indian experts and the efforts of the all-pervasive Administrative Reforms Commission might not have been too perceptible at times, but taken together they have made some far-reaching changes in the administrative machinery, although more radical changes in the mental make

up, approach and attitudes of the administrative machinery have yet to register a more concrete impact on the total situation. As the Indian experience in administrative reforms illustrates, the crucial failure of reforms efforts had been in respect of their implementation. But the success achieved also amply demonstrates that reform proposals, if properly conceived in an indigenous and realistic perspective and implemented with zeal, spirit and motivation with which they were made, are bound to enhance the system's administrative capabilities. Another important consideration is that it is better to be selectively effective than take generalised approach and thus diffuse our limited resources leading to not very perceptible or lasting impact.

The collection of articles in the present volume in the series of Silver Jubilee volumes of *The Indian Journal of Public Administration* has focused attention on various controversial issues arising out of the desire of the policy-makers in India to continuously strive to reform the administrative structure. Not only the articles selected and presented here reflect an overview of the various administrative reform measures undertaken by the government since the British times but these also present an objective analysis of some of the most obvious and neglected areas of public administration which need to be attended to at the Centre and state levels.

We sincerely hope that the volume would not only highlight some important developments and issues of administrative reforms in India but would also enthuse many scholars and practitioners in the field to think afresh as regards many of the problems for improvement and vitalisation of the administrative system. This compilation would be of particular interest to the students of comparative administration. It is not necessary that we always agree to all the views expressed by the learned authors. The more relevant point is as to how they stimulate our thinking process and response to the issues raised.

I am thankful to Prof. S.R. Maheshwari who has undertaken to edit and provide a perceptive introduction to this volume. The updated bibliography at the end should be of immense help to researchers and scholars in the field.

NEW DELHI  
FEBRUARY, 1984

T.N. CHATURVEDI

## **Volume Editor's Introduction**

Administrative reform is among the first loves of a developing country—and, perhaps, its continuing disappointment. A newly independent country like India is characterized, more than anything, by a general lack or inadequacy of development which it is firmly committed to make up quickly, mainly through the instrumentality of its public administration. In the tasks of development, therefore, the administrative system occupies a central place; and since so much is expected to be accomplished by administration, its toning up becomes of greatest importance in any society. In India, in addition, the attempt to strengthen the administrative capabilities must reckon with two factors. First, the country in a federation with two levels of government, each endowed with both functions and resources and ordinarily autonomous of each other. Secondly, India has pledged itself to bring about development through planning but at the same time adopting the principle of mixed economy. Both federalism and 'mixed' nature of economic development through the mechanism of state planning adds to the complexity as well as delicacy of the task of reform of administration. What is more, administrative reform must have to be carried out within the larger ordering framework of parliamentary democracy. As the country's administrative system is among the legacies left by the colonial power, one of the goals of reform is to strengthen the democratic processes in administration and to take it closer to the people.

### **OVERVIEW OF REFORMS BEFORE INDEPENDENCE**

It should not, however, be assumed that administrative reform became the concern only of the Government of independent India. Reform in administration is a continuing business, and even the British Government was addressing itself to the question of evolving an administrative system which could respond most harmoniously to the goals it had set before itself. It is not the intention of the present note to undertake an inventory of the earlier attempts. Yet some of the developments may be highlighted.

It was in 1917 that for the first time His Majesty's Government in Britain announced the goal of its rule in India: Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, announced in the Parliament: "The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in

complete accord, is that of the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire.” The British Government thus held out the promise of responsible government for India.

The implications of this announcement were far-reaching. The Government of India Act, 1919 launched India on the new course. For the first time, the elected representatives of the people (although the franchise was very much restricted) were entrusted with the task of governance in a limited field of public administration, and thus a beginning in responsible government was made. This constitutional arrangement is commonly known as ‘Dyarchy’. Also, as a result of such a political arrangement, changes in the administrative machinery and its personnel became necessary. For instance, Indianisation of the civil service became from now onwards an established and regular policy of the Government of India, and His Majesty’s Government appointed in 1922 the Lee Commission to suggest the rate and method of Indianisation of the superior civil services.

With the elected ministers steering the wheel of government in the nation-building sector of public administration, like agriculture, education, public health, animal husbandry, cooperatives, etc., the country’s administrative system began to come under new stimulus—and receive a new direction. These ministers began to formulate and implement developmental programmes in the ‘transferred’ field of administration and as a result both the ministers and the civil servants began to get nearer each other, and what is more, receive training in what is now known as development administration. ‘Dyarchy’ suffered from several weaknesses and limitations, but the importance of this experience should not be missed.

The political landscape was changing and the second landmark relevant to the students of administration is the passage of the Government of India Act, 1935. As is wellknown, ‘Dyarchy’ was replaced by provincial autonomy which enabled the elected representatives of the people to run the provincial government in accordance with the pledges made by them at the time of election. As the Congress ministries were formed in a majority of the provinces, they began implementing the programmes of socio-economic nature about which the party had pledged itself in the election manifesto of 1937. Not only were the contents of development expanded and strengthened as a result, but also its tempo got considerably accelerated under popular rule. Also, as at the time of the Government of India Act, 1919, the British Government in India undertook an investigation of the administrative system to bring it in harmony with the altered constitutional arrangements. Mention must

be made of the Government of India Secretariat Committee (Wheeler Committee), 1936 and the Committee on Organisation and Procedure (Maxwell Committee), 1937. Both these committees, recommended many changes in the machinery of government, procedures of work and personnel.

World War II shook public administration in many ways, but one upshot of it was a clear articulation and definite realisation of new goals and new objectives by the government of the country. Sir Richard Tottenham, in his classic report (1945-46), emphatically indicated that the future public administration of India was to be development-oriented. What is more to this end, Tottenham suggested a number of measures to make the country's public administration a fit instrument for these new and novel tasks.

Independent India, therefore, had a heritage which helped it considerably in channelisation of its activities in the formative years of independence. This was an asset of no humble significance.

#### INDIAN ADMINISTRATION IN THE FIFTIES

This does not mean that the imbalances and weaknesses of the administrative system were not entirely unknown when it was encountering the new functions and responsibilities. Indeed, consequent upon the public assumption of new tasks and functions, the administrative inadequacies were becoming more glaring and sharply focused. The First Five Year Plan (1951-56) aptly pointed out: "First, there are the problems bearing on the entire field of public administration, such as, for instance, the achievement of high levels of integrity, efficiency and economy. To these may be added the need for structural changes to raise the level of administration in the less advanced states and to equip the government with machinery to carry out its economic function in a manner more adequate to its present responsibilities. In a second group, we may include problems which bear upon the administration of development programmes in the district. It is in the district that the administration comes into the most intimate touch with the citizen and development programmes become vital to the people. It is, therefore, necessary to consider questions, such as the improvement of the machinery of general administration, on which so much else depends, the establishment of an appropriate agency of development at the village level, the coordination of development activities undertaken on behalf of government, the state agencies, and, finally, questions such as regional coordination and supervision of district development programmes and the place of social service agencies in the reconstruction of rural life." It concluded: "In all directions, the pace of development will depend largely upon the quality of public administration, the efficiency, with

which it works, and the cooperation which it evokes. The tasks facing the administration are larger in magnitude and more complex, but also richer in meaning than in earlier days." And the new challenges began to be met.

#### ABOUT ARTICLES IN THE VOLUME

The articles, included in this work and originally appearing in *The Indian Journal of Public Administration*, deal with various facets of reform in administration. B.B. Misra rapidly surveys the various attempts at administrative reform under the Raj. Using the historical method, Misra's excellent analysis brings out the changes in the machinery of governance and its personnel and he unfolds the pattern of interaction between administration and its ecology. S.G. Barve's piece enunciates the broad approach to the question of administrative reform and lays stress particularly on institutional devices to strengthen the system of administration in the country. He pleads for setting up of an Ombudsman in the country. No institution has perhaps suffered such a long gestation period as that of an Ombudsman. This is despite the fact that all political parties profess support for it, and the Central Government too has accepted the proposal as far back as in 1968. But the government and Parliament have been, alas, too busy and have not found the time to enact the necessary legislation. Ajit Banerjee examines the work of the various committees and other organs of the government to adapt the administrative system to the new challenges, the span of his attention being the first fifteen years of independence. He has also suggested certain changes in the government's policy in respect of administrative reform and argues, among other things, for appointment of an Ombudsman. Banerjee's analysis of administrative reform in India, written in the early sixties, stops around mid-fifties. B.S. Narula examines the work done by the most impressive reforms body ever set up by the Central Government in India. Taking four years to complete the task and costing nearly one crore rupees, the Administrative Reforms Commission produced twenty reports, besides the reports of its 33 study teams and working groups, making as many as 680 recommendations. Narula's is a fairly detailed and sympathetic analysis of the working and the work of the ARC.

While reform of the Central Administration is important, no less is the need for energising the administrative system in the states. Indeed, the Central Government is mostly 'staff', and the 'line' functions constitute the direct responsibility of the state governments in India. It is no less significant that both major developmental functions and regulatory tasks figure in the State List of the Constitution. Thus viewed, the twenty-two states easily hold the key to India's development and

progress. B.B. Misra has taken an integrated approach to administrative reforms in his article, and thus he discusses reforms at the provincial level too. But Bata K. Dey discusses reforms at state level administration as suggested by the Administrative Reforms Commission (1966-70), the L.P. Singh, L.K. Jha Note (1975), and the Chief Secretaries Conference (1976). A student of state administration would find Dey's article interesting, but he should also study the reforms suggested by administrative reform committees set up by the state governments. A.P. Saxena discusses agricultural administration and among others, lays stress on the use of management techniques for improving administration.

Should an administrative reformer's approach be total or nodal is a question which is widely debated. M. Sunder Raj identifies what he considers to be the priority areas in administration and even moves forward to make definite proposals for reform. Sunder Raj does not restrict his perspective to one particular level of government and as such his piece is addressed to both the levels of government—Central and state.

India's experience with administrative reform discloses, above all, poor implementation of recommendations and suggestions made to this end. Indeed, implementation of reforms has proved to be the knottiest problem confronting reforms. K.N. Butani, in his article on "Implementing Administrative Innovations and Reforms", recommends an administrative strategy to secure first-rate implementation of measures of reform.

All taken together, the various articles in the present volume deal with administrative reform in India in a comprehensive and analytical way. Banerjee's piece does not go beyond mid-fifties while Narula covers the reform from 1966 to 1970. Administrative reforms from, say, 1954 to 1966 and from 1970 to the present day are not traced in any papers.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS: FROM 1954 TO 1966 AND FROM 1970 ONWARDS: AN OVERVIEW<sup>1</sup>

The year 1954 is a milestone in the history of administrative reforms in India. In March 1954, the Central Government announced the setting up of the O & M Division, with the aim of initiating and sustaining a concerted effort to improve administrative efficiency in all branches of administration. The O & M Division was placed in the Cabinet Secretariat with a view to imparting to it a high degree of prestige. From its inception, the O & M set-up was federally designed. Each ministry of the government established its own O & M

<sup>1</sup>For a detailed analysis of administrative reform in India, see S.R. Maheshwari, *Administrative Reforms in India*, New Delhi, Macmillan, 1981.

cell, the function of the higher level body being to provide professional leadership and drive in the field of administrative improvement and to build up a common fund of information, experience and competence. The O & M set-up strove to: (i) develop proper procedures for disposal of work, (ii) control mechanisms for keeping watch over the disposal of receipts and reducing delays, (iii) regular system of inspections, and (iv) training of lower levels of personnel. The O & M Division used to prepare a report, generally at the end of the year which was submitted to Parliament and discussed there. In all, seven reports were prepared; all taken together these reports of the O & M Division provide vivid insight into the state of administrative health in India and contain very sensible recommendations for reform. The O & M Division brought out a journal with a view to creating improvement consciousness among public personnel and disseminating ideas and proposals for reform of administration.

The O & M Division was merged into the Department of Administrative Reforms in 1964 when the latter was first established. The newly created department, a part of the Ministry of Home Affairs, began to undertake work relating to administrative improvement on a larger scale, but one of its functions was to undertake work preparatory to the setting up of a high-powered commission having extensive terms of reference. The Administrative Reforms Commission was announced in 1966.

The period since 1970 has been relatively colourless, even noiseless so far as administrative reform is concerned. The Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms has been engaged in processing the recommendations made by the Administrative Reforms Commission (1966-70). To build up administrative capabilities, training programmes for various categories and levels of public personnel have been initiated. Besides, there is a shift from macro-level reforms to micro-level changes and to this end consultancy assignments have come to be given to experts and consultants on a larger scale. There is a wider, even if somewhat uneasy, acceptance of corruption in administration, and this has happened not because corruption has been reduced or eliminated or brought under firm control.

One should not infer from the foregoing that Indian administration is a lost cause. Such a view would be completely erroneous and unwarranted. India's public administration has to its credit many achievements, which should be the pride of any administration in the world. The successive five year plans have been implemented. The country has made perceptible progress in various fields, and today it ranks very high in the Third World. These gains have been made possible substantially because of public administration. Indian administration has successfully tackled many crises situations, and its record in this respect only confirms the high degree of native strength and resilience it possesses.

That it suffers from many weaknesses is also not denied. What is more, many of these administrative shortcomings have become more marked because people's expectational level has today gone up very high and what is more, the administrative system is under much closer scrutiny and surveillance.

SHRIRAM MAHESHWARI



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# **Efforts for Administrative Reforms Before Independence\***

**B.B. Misra**

**T**HE OBJECT of this article is not to present in any detail an account of Indian administration. As its title indicates, it is merely to outline some of the main currents of administrative reforms effected from time to time over a period of nearly two hundred years of British rule. This period may be divided into two parts : the first comprising the administration of the East India Company, and the other the administration of India under the Crown from 1858 to 1947.

## **REFORMS UNDER THE COMPANY**

The character of the political constitution of the State under the Company was determined by principles derived from two distinct sources. As a legatee of the Mughal Emperor appointed under the grant of the Diwani in 1765, the Company was the all powerful agent of an irresponsible despot, while as a trading corporation it was bound by the provisions of the Charters and Acts of British Parliament. The principle of the constitution which the Regulating Act provided for the Company's Indian Government in 1773 was derived from the second source. The civil and military government and the revenues of British territories in India were vested in Governor-General and a Council of four members who were guided by the rule of the majority. The Act also provided for the establishment of a Supreme Court of Judicature at Calcutta to punish those who were employed directly or indirectly in the service of the Company. This constitution was revised in 1784 by Pitt's India Act which reduced the number of councillors to three and created a parliamentary board of six commissioners called the Board of Control, with powers to direct, supervise and control the Company's Indian Governments. The Amending Act of 1786 authorised the Governor-General even to override the decision of his Council.

\*From *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. IX, No. 3, 1963, pp. 311-35.

## 2      *Administrative Reforms*

But this power was not to be used except in extraordinary circumstances involving the safety and tranquillity of British possessions. Even so, he was to do it in his executive capacity only, and that too not outside his Council.

The examples of the Mughals and the Marathas did by all means conduce to despotism. During early British rule, the Company's servants actually took pride in being styled as *nawabs*. They introduced a system of ceremonials which conformed to the concept of oriental dignity. But its parliamentary control and council form of government served to counteract that tendency. It encouraged the division of authority and formation of decision by the majority. Distance from London, it is true, did give them latitude of action. But it also turned them into a government of record, which reduced rashness and haste in the measures of administration.

By the very circumstances of its growth, therefore, the Company's Government turned into what might be called a constitutional despotism. While the establishment of a regular hierarchy of courts and legislative authority had the tendency to strengthen constitutionalism, the combination of executive and judicial functions at certain key levels of administration bred despotism. This peculiar constitution of the Company's Government in India was the result of a phased development. The administrative change it introduced from time to time was similarly phased. It corresponded at each stage to the nature of its constitutional development.

### **Period (1765-93)**

The first period of nearly thirty years is a story mainly of Warren Hastings and Cornwallis whose administrative reforms were designed to convert a body of the Company's traders into a cadre of civil administrators. It is a story of the manner in which they tried to build up a system of administration adequate to the requirements of a territorial power.

#### *Under Hastings (1772-85)*

The necessity of reforms under Hastings arose from two main circumstances: (1) the disruption of the Mughal administration, and (2) the disinclination of the Company to take over the direct responsibility of administration through the agency of its own European servants. Under the original constitution of the Mughals, the *faujdar* was the executive head of the district administration. He was assisted in the discharge of his duties by village watchmen who were under the immediate charge of a *zamindar*. Being distributed throughout the *zamindari*, they "enabled the zamindar both to watch over the internal

quiet, and to obtain information of whatever passed in any part of it; and so far as the *faujdari* jurisdiction (was) inherent in the zamindar, in the exercise of it he was subject to a *faujdar*, who had the superintendence of a district comprehending many zamindaris".<sup>1</sup> The Mughal system was in fact land-oriented and those who had the management of land did the ancillary duty of policing, subject to the control of the official apparatus of administration.

On the disintegration of the central authority of the Mughals, the principal and the ancillary organs of administrations began to work at cross purposes. With the spread of anarchy the *zamindars* or farmers of land revenue superseded the authority of the *faujdars* in the districts. The state of political uncertainty that followed the victory of the English at Plassey (1757) made the situation still worse. The ruling influence of the Company's servants crippled the authority of the Mughal *nawabs* (governors) without supplying any alternative. By 1765 the Company came to be the virtual sovereign of three of the major Provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, with the Northern Circars ceded to it by the Nizam of Hyderabad. And yet it declined for commercial reasons to take over the district responsibility of administration through the agency of its own European servants. Steps were taken to appoint 'supervisors' in 1769, but without adequate executive authority. Crimes and corruption naturally became rampant. The Company was interested in the returns of revenue rather than administrative reforms.

The basic principle of Hastings' reforms was to introduce for the first time a political element in the administration of the Company's territories. "Whatever may have been the conduct of individuals or even of the collective members of your former administrations", he convinced the directors, "the blame (of corruption and indiscipline in the service) is not so much imputable to them as to the want of a principle of government adequate to its substance, and a coercive power to enforce it."<sup>2</sup> Consistently with this principle, Parliament passed the Regulating Act which brought the subordinate provinces under a limited control of the Governor-General in Council. Consistently with this principle, again, Hastings reorganised his central secretariat so as to ensure a regular flow of supplies in his wars against the country powers. With the same end in view, he initiated proposals for some kind of training for the Company's covenanted servants. He adopted measures to reduce the power of *zamindars* who on the decline of the Mughal Government had arrogated to themselves such functions as

<sup>1</sup>Forrest, G. W., *Selections from Letters, Despatches and other State Papers preserved in the Foreign Department of Government of India, 1772-1785*, Calcutta, Superintendent of Government Printing, 1890, Vol. II, p. 454.

<sup>2</sup>Keith, A. B., *Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy*, London, Oxford University Press, 1922, pp. 36-37.

#### 4      *Administrative Reforms*

justice and taxation which more properly belonged to the state. With the same object in view, he reconstituted the districts in 1772 and placed them under the Company's European servants called collectors, with powers to administer civil justice and supervise criminal administration which in his time formed part of the *nawabs'* government. In 1781 he abolished the office of the Mughal *faujdar* and appointed in his place European magistrate who headed the police administration of a district and in addition superintended the administration of civil courts, for under the orders of the Company the collectors had been recalled for a time from most of the districts in favour of Indian *naibs* in 1773. In the administrative structure he so built up in Bengal, the collector was the chief executive officer who also exercised certain judicial powers in the determination of revenue or rent suits. He thus laid the foundation of modern district administration on a pattern which other provinces adopted with such minor changes as local conditions required.

Hastings was however discredited for two reasons. First, the employment of European agency in the management of land revenue increased the cost of collection to the great prejudice of the Company's commercial interest. Secondly, Hastings incurred the displeasure of the *zamindars* whose lands he had settled with speculators in a bid to raise the figures of collection. The *zamindars* were not slow to move the Home Authorities and have a clause inserted in Pitt's India Act requiring the government to ascertain through inquiry the nature and extent of their right to landed property.

#### *Under Cornwallis (1786-93)*

These circumstances and political considerations were in the main responsible for Cornwallis's reforms. The core of these reforms was his Permanent Settlement (1793), his recognition of the *zamindari* as the private property of *zamindars*. From that followed the separation of revenue and judicial functions which by 1786 had come to be united in the office of collector. He became a revenue officer pure and simple. The civil judge who also acted as magistrate became the chief executive officer of the district.

Cornwallis believed that the landed proprietors could never consider the privileges which had been conferred upon them as secure, whilst the revenue officers were vested with judicial powers. His government, therefore, decided that the supreme power should divest itself of all interference with judicial administration except in the last resort and that the trust of dispensing justice in the first instance should be delegated to courts superintended by able, honest and upright men with duties restricted exclusively to the administration of justice in all cases arising either from arrears and exactions of rent or other suits of purely civil nature. All Indians, whether individuals or officers of

government, were made subject to their jurisdiction. Even government itself, when a party with its subject in matters of property, was to be bound by the decree of these courts of justice.

Another remarkable change that Cornwallis effected was in the administration of criminal justice and police, which in law had formed no part of the *diwani*. He subjected the Muhammadan criminal law to a process of civil legislation, dispensed with the Muhammadan judges of criminal courts, organised provincial courts of circuit, and appointed to these European Judges who tried criminal and civil cases subject to the final determination of the Governor-General in Council acting as *Sadr Diwani* and *Nizamat Adalat*.

Cornwallis's police reforms possessed three main features. In the first place, the landholders and farmers of land revenue who kept up establishments of *thanadars* and *chaukidars* were divested of their entire police function and were accordingly required to discharge them, with instructions not to entertain any such establishment in future. Secondly, the districts were divided into thanas or police jurisdiction of about twenty to thirty miles square in extent. To each of these was appointed an Indian Officer called *daroga* of police with a small establishment of a clerk, a *jamadar* and ten *barkandazes*, immediately responsible to the magistrate of his district. Thirdly, such of the old rural police of *chaukidars* or ancient militia as still operated, were placed under the orders of the *daroga*, but their payment and control remained vested in the zamindars.

The police *daroga* of Cornwallis thus stepped into the position previously held by *zamindari thanadars*. Unlike the *zamindari thanadar*, the *daroga* became a direct instrument of government operating under the immediate control of the English magistrate. What was entirely new, however, was the abolition of the local responsibility of the *zamindars* who had to disband their *thanadars* and such of the old police militia as were not duly registered with the *daroga*. Cornwallis was the first to reduce the ancient institution of communal police to the subservience of the ruler-appointed police *daroga*.

Cornwallis's reforms thus carried forward to some perfection the political principle which Hastings had first introduced in order to make the state into an effective instrument of coercion. His steps to reorganise the central secretariat, to establish a separate judicial department, to appoint a secretary-general, and to Europeanise the public services as a whole were all designed to serve the same purpose. Out of the original commercial constitution of the Company which had in the past already provided for graded appointments and written 'covenants', Hastings and Cornwallis in fact created an administrative service. Its public character flowed in the main from the increasing administrative responsibilities that devolved on it since 1772. Under

Cornwallis they came to occupy all the positions of trust in the administration. Their salaries increased in proportion to the responsibilities of their office. And to these was added a series of strict rules of public conduct, specifying punishment for indulgence in private trade or acquisition of landed property.

### **Period (1793-1833)**

The second phase, a period of nearly forty years from 1793, was marked by a rapid expansion of the Company's territories and the establishment of British paramountcy over the whole of the country, excepting the Punjab, the North-West Frontier and Burma. Doubtless, there were independent Indian states outside the limits of British dominions. But their independence was only in name. They were in subsidiary alliance with the Company's government and British residents controlled their affairs to all intents and purposes.

#### *Under Wellesley (1795-1806)*

The political norm, the beginning of an imperial policy, was set by Wellesley who attempted completely to do away with the commercial element in public administration. He reconstituted the civil service on a principle conformable to the trust of governing an extensive and populous empire.

The expediency of a new orientation of the civil service was realised in view of two main circumstances : (1) the expansion of territories and internal insecurity, especially arising from a hostile muslim public opinion over the disintegration of Mysore and death of its ruler Tipu, in 1799, and (2) the threat of French invasions towards the close of the eighteenth century, especially the ideological threat of the French Revolution that agitated the continent of Europe and influenced the minds of some individuals in the civil and military service of the Company even in India.<sup>3</sup> To counteract both, Wellesley declared imperialism, not commerce, as the aim of British rule and devised a plan for the regular flow of abilities and talents in the civil service as the best means to perpetuate that rule. Clarifying his concept of imperialism he thus wrote : "Duty, policy and honour require that it (the Indian Empire) should not be administered as a temporary and precarious acquisition, it must be considered as a sacred trust and a permanent possession." And to govern such an empire on a permanent basis, he added, "we shall require a succession of able magis-

<sup>3</sup>See Wellesley's Minute, dated 10th July, 1800, in Martin, Montgomery, *Despatches, Minutes and Correspondence of the Marquess of Wellesley, K.G. during his administration in India*, London, W.H. Allen, 1937, Vol. II, p. 346.

trates, wise and honest judges, and skilful statesmen properly qualified to conduct the ordinary movements of the great machine of Government".<sup>4</sup>

To ensure a regular supply of such men, therefore, Wellesley proposed the establishment of a systematic course of higher education and training; for he was not satisfied with the accidental supply of virtue and talents. "In the Civil Service", he believed, "we must seek not the instruments by which kingdoms are overthrown, revolutions are accomplished, or wars conducted, but an inexhaustible supply of useful knowledge, cultivated talents, and well ordered and disciplined morals."<sup>5</sup> These attainments, according to Wellesley, were the necessary instruments of a well regulated government designed to secure "affluence and happiness, willing obedience and grateful attachment over every region and district of this vast empire."<sup>6</sup> With this object the Governor-General in Council established under Regulation IX of 1800 the College of Fort William of Calcutta where every student nominated to the Service was to undergo a probationary period of training for three years. This period of probation was to be devoted to the completion of the prescribed course of studies without any student being required to perform any public duties.

To counteract the ideological dangers of the French Revolution Wellesley provided for religious instructions and made rules to ascertain, besides ability, the religious and moral character of every servant before he could be declared eligible or considered fit for selection to higher and important offices. He, in fact, recommended to the Directors that students should be sent out to India at 15 or 16 years of age, so that they might be tractable instruments and that their morals and habits might be formed with ease in the course of their education and training at Calcutta. Another object of religious bias in Wellesley's training programme was to discourage the spirit of 'luxury and dissipation' which according to him had the tendency "to enervate the mind and impair its nobler qualities, to introduce a hurtful emulation in expense, to set up false standards of merit, to confound the different orders of society, and to beget an aversion to serious occupations."<sup>7</sup>

In the establishment of the College of Fort William, Wellesley was also guided by his policy to impart to the Civil Service an all-India character by requiring all civil servants to receive their training at Fort William where the posting of each successful candidate was to be determined by the Governor-General in Council according to his inclina-

<sup>4</sup>See Wellesley's Minute, *op. cit.*, p. 339.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 340.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 340.

<sup>7</sup>Despatches to Bengal, 25 May, 1798, para 77, p. 412.

tion and the requirement of the Government.

After a period of five years of its working, the Company, however, reduced the College to a mere school of oriental languages. The operation of the scheme *in toto* would have affected the exercise of their patronage and implied a consequent transfer of loyalty from London to Calcutta. In a Despatch of 1805, they clearly pointed out that the precipitate establishment of the College had too much the appearance of an intention to supersede the Company's previous deliberation, to restrict its power to mere nomination of candidates, and to authorise the Governor-General in Council to appoint them to the different Presidencies, subject only to the successful completion of their studies at the college. But the principle of Wellesley's plan did not perish. The Directors themselves established a comparable institution at Hertford which was later transferred to Haileybury in 1809. Wellesley's rule to admit students at the age of fifteen, his emphasis on religious bias, the probationary period of three years of training, and the system of examination were all adopted in the form in which he had introduced at the College of Fort William. On the successful completion of his course, a candidate received his appointment from the Court of Directors, subject of course to the production of proper testimonials as to proficiency and moral conduct from his principal. His rank in the service was determined by his position at the final examination of the college.

Intellectual as well as moral discipline was thus recognised as a fit answer to the problems of imperial policy, the problems that arose from internal insecurity and external danger. Added to this was a considerable augmentation in the salary, status and responsibility of such of the superior civil servants as occupied the office of secretaries to government. Instead of being confined to the execution of routine business their function extended to planning and research.

Their work was coordinated by chief secretary to government who received an annual salary of Rs. 55,000, a sum of Rs. 5,000 more than the salary payable to a secretary. Another feature of Wellesley's reforms was that he augmented the staff of his Assistants to which he recruited promising young men who later rose to positions of eminence in the Civil Service.

#### *Under Moira and After (1813-33)*

The factors which in the course of this period determined the nature and extent of reforms at the district level were chiefly three : (1) the defects of the Cornwallis Code<sup>8</sup>, (2) considerations of economy and efficiency, and (3) the 'utilitarian' influence.

<sup>8</sup>The whole body of the Regulations passed by Cornwallis on 1 May, 1793 for governance of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa are called Cornwallis Code.

By far the most serious defect of the Code that came to light in the course of its working was the union of the magistracy with the office of the judge. To burden the latter with the determination of both revenue and purely civil suits was a serious error, especially in the permanently settled districts where resort to judicial action was the only alternative to have the respective rights of the agricultural classes duly ascertained. The consequent delay in the disposal of civil suits encouraged rioting and added to the weight of business on the criminal side. Experience, therefore, dictated the expediency of reinvesting the revenue officers with the determination of rent suits subject to an appeal to civil court. As for the control of crimes, the best remedy suggested was to have a separate magistrate for each district. But motives of economy did not permit the proposed separation. Under Bentinck, therefore, the magistracy came to be re-united with the office of the collector. This remedy suggested itself in the course of the survey and settlement operations in the North-Western Province where the government realised the difficulties of carrying on these operations without investing revenue officers with certain degree of judicial and executive authority.

Another serious weakness of the Cornwallis system was its exclusive dependence on European personnel. The malady became pronounced when litigation increased. To obviate the difficulty, therefore, Indian personnel came to be increasingly employed right from 1803. The *munsiff* who received a certain commission on the number of suits tried came to be recognised as a stipendiary officer. A new post of *Sadr Amin* was created. It continued until it was abolished in 1868. The Principal *Sadr Amin* was authorised in 1836 to try civil suits of any value independently of the European district judge. In 1833, Bentinck established a new cadre of uncovenanted revenue officers called deputy collectors who assisted the collector in the discharge of his revenue duties.

The increasing Indianisation of subordinate services was to an extent a result of 'utilitarian'<sup>9</sup> influence which followed the abolition of the Company's trade monopoly in 1813. As the collector also became magistrate, so did the divisional commissioner of revenue created under Reg. I of 1829 combine in his office the duties and powers of circuit courts and superintendents of police. In 1831, the District and Sessions Judge took over the functions of these courts. But as commissioners of revenue they continued to act as superintendents of police until 1837 when provision was made for separate police superintendents.

<sup>9</sup>Essentially, however, great utilitarians like Jeremy Bentham and James Mill favoured the growth of the executive power of the state by means of combining functions under a codified system of law. In other words, Utilitarianism signified centralisation of authority through parliamentary legislation. In its application to India it meant a union of functions at both superior and subordinate levels.

For rural areas 'utilitarianism' meant further annexation to the state of such functions as previously belonged to the *panchayat* (village communities) or *zamindar*.

The growth of the state power expressed itself in two other ways. In the first place, the superior levels of administration tended more and more to become a controlling agency, while the execution of details came to be vested locally in the districts. Secondly, the 'utilitarian' influence led to the liberalisation of the Muhammadan criminal law which enabled criminal courts to pass sentence of conviction in spite of the *fatwa* or decree of the Muhammadan law officers to the contrary. Regulations were also enacted to introduce a system of trial by jury, to reduce the severity and iniquity of punishment, and to bring a number of iniquitous social customs within the cognisance of criminal courts.

Thus, the underlying principle of reforms during this period was that the state was slowly but steadily expanding the area of its operation. This it did not so much by a declared extension of its functions as by a gradual impingement of its law on custom. The natural consequence of such a policy was to increase the load of public business and consequently the powers and influence of district officers. The appointment of divisional commissioners was naturally a device to regulate the exercise of increasing responsibilities that devolved on the districts.

### **Period (1833-57)**

Under the Charter Act of 1833, the Company surrendered all its real and personal property in India and held it now in trust for the Crown with effect from 22 April, 1834. It also surrendered its commercial privileges, and concerned itself chiefly with the realisation of the value of its assets which became a charge on the Indian revenues. Consistently with the Company's financial agreement with the Crown, the superintendence, direction and control of the entire civil and military government were vested in the Governor-General of India in Council, separate and distinct from the old Presidency of Fort William, and a new Presidency of Agra was created in 1836 out of the old Presidency. Since the new Government of India emerged from the old Bengal Government with its capital not removed from Calcutta, the Governor-General continued to act as the Governor of Bengal until the Charter Act of 1853 provided for a separate Lieutenant-Governor appointed in 1854.

The main feature of the administrative reforms of this period was further centralisation. As in the preceding period, here too, it was supported by considerations of economy and efficiency, as well as political exigencies and 'Utilitarian' influences. The old pattern of Governor in Council, for instance, remained limited to Madras and Bombay. Two of the new provinces, namely, the North-Western Provinces

and Bengal came to be administered each by a lieutenant-governor, a civil servant, who was appointed by the Governor-General in Council. His rule was personal : he had no Executive Council.

Upon a lower footing than the lieutenant-governor stood the office of chief commissioner created for the first time in 1853 for the administration of the Punjab annexed in 1849. John Lawrence was the first to be appointed to this office. The title Chief Commissioner arose apparently from the fact that in the Punjab there were at the time judicial and revenue commissioners whose functions were analogous to those of the *sadr* court and the Board of Revenue in Bengal. It was therefore necessary to provide the head of the province with a higher title 'chief commissioner'. The Punjab example was soon followed in Oudh in 1856, and the pattern so approved was later adopted elsewhere. Theoretically, such parts of British territory in India as did not occur within the presidency of a Governor in Council or the province of a lieutenant-governor, were to be under the immediate authority and management of the Governor-General in Council himself. A chief commissioner, therefore, acted on his behalf, exercising only such powers as the Governor-General in Council deemed fit to confer on him. He was appointed without any reference to Act of Parliament.

The control of the Governor-General in Council over the provinces other than Madras and Bombay thus became fully entrenched. Even the Presidency of Madras and Bombay lost for the time their powers of separate legislation and fresh expenditure in regard to establishments.

A much greater degree of centralisation was introduced in the administration of the districts annexed to British Rule under Dalhousie (1848-56). All his acquisitions were non-regulation provinces administered on a principle under which revenue, police, magisterial and judicial functions were united together in the hands of the deputy commissioner (corresponding to the collectors of the regulation provinces). The same pattern applied to their assistants below and to commissioners above them.

Dalhousie also introduced a system of Annual Report the object of which was further to tighten control from top to bottom. He called upon the Provinces to furnish a regular annual account of the progress made in the various departments. This not only constituted a standard record of administration, but afforded a ready means to the Government of India to exercise control in the matters of policy over the departments subordinate to them. At the same time it assisted the Government of India in advising, and, if necessary, intervening in regard to the conduct of provincial administration, and in the last resort, helped the Home Government to do the same where it deemed necessary. The system, in fact, became an additional instrument of centralisation.

A second feature of the administrative reforms of this period was

the growth of a legislative authority. The Charter Act of 1833 provided for the appointment of an additional member to the Executive Council for making laws and regulations. Macaulay was the first to be appointed to this office. The framers of the Act did never realise that by introducing an additional member to the Executive Council they were laying the foundation of a separate legislature, a potential counterpoise to executive dominance. But when under the Charter Act of 1853 Dalhousie raised the number of additional members to six, and established rules of legislative business to guide its proceedings, the result was the emergence of what might be called a miniature parliament, an object of serious concern to the Home authorities. The Indian Councils Act, 1861, was designed to reduce its independence, although what Dalhousie had done in keeping with Macaulay's tradition could not completely be undone. The legislative foundation had been laid.

Another check on the executive was the work of the Law Commission appointed under the Act of 1833, with Macaulay as its first chairman. Its object was to build on a general and uniform principle a body of civil and penal codes as well as codes of procedure so that the administration of justice could be freed completely from religious bias or racial discrimination and that both Indians and Europeans could be subject to the same judicial control.<sup>10</sup>

Both legislative and judicial reforms were in fact designed to meet the requirements of Europeans who came out to India in large numbers on the abolition of the Company's trade in 1833. Since they would not submit to the executive-made regulations based on the primitive character of the Muhammadan criminal law, steps were taken to modify the constitution of courts and legislative authority in a manner consistent in some degree with the rule of law and freedom of the judiciary. The policy decision of 1835 to promote English education and to encourage the liberty of the Press had the tendency similarly to mitigate the despotism of the executive government.

Indeed the whole problem of British policy at this period was how best to provide a good government to a people to whom they would not give a free government. And in trying to provide their image of a good government they did two things : they created a strong and highly centralised executive on one hand and provided certain checks and balances on the other. The latter consisted of two parts, the first comprising judicial and legislative checks, the second educational and consequently social. Thus, they set in motion two mutually conflicting currents, and it required the genius of a highly sophisticated and constantly flowing class of political engineers to keep the two forces evenly balanced, for they always

<sup>10</sup>See Halifax Papers, India Office Manuscript, European, (I. O. MSS. Eur.) F. 78 (93) Para 6.

tended to fall apart and disturb the working of the administrative machinery which at lower levels represented the arrangement at the top.

## REFORMS UNDER THE CROWN

### Period (1858-1907)

Indian administration under the Crown began with the passing of the Government of India Act, 1858. It abolished the Court of Directors and the Board of Control; created in their place a Secretary of State for India, who was to be a Minister of the rank of Cabinet; and simultaneously established a Council of 15 members. Except in financial matters where no appropriation of any part of the Indian revenue could be made without a concurrence of the majority of its members, the decision of the Secretary of State was to be final in all other matters. Instead of the Court and the Board, this Act practically provided for one man's rule in London. No major change was made in the Government of India except that the Secretary of State in Council was to appoint with the concurrence of the majority of members present the several Executive Councillors of the Governor-General and the Governors of Madras and Bombay. The appointment of the several lieutenant-governors and the chief commissioners was to proceed immediately from the Governor-General without his council. As the representative of the Crown he came to be designated as the Viceroy of India.

For the despatch of business, Canning introduced a portfolio system in the reorganisation of the Governor-General's Council under which its individual members were placed in charge of particular departments with powers to take decisions independently of the Council in such matters as did not concern other departments.<sup>11</sup> Under this arrangement, the members of the Governor-General's Council became virtual ministers, while the position of the Secretaries to Government became analogous to that of a permanent Under Secretary of State in England. The private papers of the various secretaries of state and the viceroys, however, contain enough of evidence to show that the statutory rights of the departmental members were at times rendered nugatory, and policy decisions were taken by the heads of the Indian and London Governments without a prior discussion with the Members concerned. Curzon (1898-1905) in fact clearly pointed out that "India (was) really governed by confidential correspondence between the Secretary of State and the Viceroy".<sup>12</sup> Despotism thus became more pronounced under the Crown.

<sup>11</sup>Indian Councils Act, Section 8. The various departments of the Governments were reconstituted and their functions defined under this section.

<sup>12</sup>Hamilton Papeas, I. O. MSS. Eur. D. 510/8, p. 147.

The centralised authority of the executive government expressed itself locally through the agency of the district officers. In a Minute recorded in 1870 James Stephen described them as 'Government' itself "within their own limits and as regards the population of their districts". And this position he justified as "absolutely essential to the maintenance of British rule in India".<sup>13</sup>

On the legislative side, the Indian Councils Act, 1861, fixed the number of Additional Members between 6 and 12, not less than one-half being non-official. They were to be nominated by the Governor-General for two years. The power of legislation was restored to Madras and Bombay with a provision for the appointment of Legislative Members corresponding to those at the Centre. The Governor-General was authorised to establish, by proclamation, a Legislative Council for Bengal as well as for the North-Western Provinces and the Punjab. He used this authority in the establishment of the Legislative Council for Bengal in 1862, for the North-Western Provinces in 1886, and for the Punjab in 1897.

The functions of the Supreme Legislative Council, which under Dalhousie had extended to a deliberation of almost all matters of public interest, came to be limited to mere legislation, and this too was hedged in by a number of restrictions. But, within the limits and under the conditions imposed, the Council did possess plenary power to legislate for all persons, courts, places and things, within British India. It met in 'sessions' and conducted its business in a manner which distinguished it from the regular Executive Council of the Governor-General.

The Indian Councils Act, 1892, expanded the size of the Legislative Councils and relaxed the restrictions imposed in 1861. The non-official Members of the Supreme Legislative Council, for instance, were to be not less than 10 in number of whom 5 were to be elected respectively by the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce and the non-official members of the Legislative Councils of Madras, Bombay, Bengal and North-Western Provinces. The Provincial Legislative Councils obtained Members, elected in rotation by groups of Municipalities and District Boards, Universities, Chamber of Commerce and Trade Associations. The Act authorised the discussion of the annual financial statements and the asking of questions under certain prescribed conditions. The extension of the Legislative Councils and the enlargement of their powers were in response to the demands of educated Indians and the Indian Press.

Thus, in spite of the attempt of 1861 to curb the Legislative Councils, they continued to grow as potential instrument of executive control. As for the judiciary and the police, the reforms effected in these branches of Indian administration were a consummation of the trends that had

<sup>13</sup>I. O. Records Dept. No. 10001 (89), p. 29.

been developing since the establishment of the Law Commission in 1835. By the Indian High Courts Act of 1861, the Queen was empowered to establish by letters patent high courts of judicature in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay, and on their establishment the old chartered supreme courts and the old *sadr adalat* courts were to be abolished, the jurisdiction and the powers of the abolished Courts being transferred to the new high courts. The Act permitted the establishment of another High Court and the permission so given was exercised in the establishment of a high court for the North-Western Provinces at Allahabad in 1866. The high courts thus constituted, while entirely independent of the Executive Government in judicial matters, were made subject to its control in matters connected with their establishments. Next below the high courts came the district and sessions courts exercising both civil and criminal jurisdiction. Then came the exclusively civil courts of sub-judges and *munisiffs* on the one hand, and on the other, the criminal courts of Magistrates, divided into three classes, and empowered to pass sentence to a maximum limit of two years. Provision was also made for the appointment of honorary magistrates.

The Chief Court for the Punjab was constituted in 1866 on the same model as the high courts, but deriving its authority from the Indian Legislature, and composed of a Chief Judge and Judges appointed by the Governor-General in Council. In each of the other non-Regulation Provinces, such as Oudh, the Central Provinces, Sind, the North-West Frontier Province, Baluchistan and Coorg, the place of a Chief Court was taken by one or more judicial commissioners appointed by the Government of India. In a non-Regulation Province, the local government was authorised to invest any magistrate of the first class with powers to try any offence not punishable with death and to pass sentences of imprisonment or transportation up to seven years.

The establishment of a regular hierarchy of courts throughout India was preceded by the formation of the Code of Civil Procedure (Act VIII of 1859), of the Indian Penal Code (Act XLV of 1860), and of the Code of Criminal Procedure (Act XXV of 1861). The constitution of courts and the codification of laws formed a remarkable achievement of British rule. These gave the machinery of judicial administration a general uniform principle.

The police administration of the Company suffered from four main defects. In the first place, the revenue officers of the Company exercised a general and ill-defined control over the police. Secondly the police force was of a semi-military type with no civil constabulary forming part of the organisation. Thirdly, police and judicial duties were united in the office of the magistrate, and lastly, there was no provision for coordination and training. The first definite attempt at police organisation on a self-contained basis was made by Charles Napier in Sind after its conquest in

1843. His system, which deprived the police of judicial functions and involved a regular course of disciplinary training, was extended in 1853 to the rest of the Presidency of Bombay. The Government of India later appointed a Police Commission in 1860, and on the basis of its recommendations the Police Act V of 1861 was passed into law.

This Act, with some amendments, still governs police administration throughout the great part of India.<sup>14</sup> Each province became responsible for its own police administration, with an inspector-general at its head who was at times an I.C.S. man and sometimes an officer of the police department. The discipline and internal management of the district police force, a body of civil constabulary, came under a separate officer called district superintendent, departmentally subordinate to the inspector-general of police but immediately responsible to the district magistrate in all matters connected with the preservation of peace and the detection and suppression of crime. The controlling staff down to assistant district superintendent, mainly European, were for long nominated in India by the provincial governments. But since 1893 they began generally to be recruited by examination in England. Since 1905, however, a new grade of officers called deputy superintendents was created and Indians were recruited to it with duties similar to those of assistant superintendent.

In 1902, Curzon's government appointed a commission to enquire into the working of police administration. The action taken on its report conduced to improvement in regard to recruitment, training, organisation and remuneration of police officers. To secure coordination in respect of inter-provincial police work an Imperial Branch of Criminal Intelligence was created under the Home Department of the Government of India. Its function was to collect and communicate information regarding such forms of organised crimes, as were committed by criminal tribes, wandering gangs, organised decoits, professional prisoners and foreigners whose operations extended beyond the limits of a single province. This central agency was intended to work in cooperation with British Provinces and Indian States. The Director of Criminal Intelligence took the place of the superintendent of thugi and dacoity who was a lineal successor of an officer first appointed in 1830 for a systematic operation against a class of professional assassins called thugs who strangled their victims in various ways.

Indian administration under the Crown, especially during the earlier part of this period, was thus more or less a continuation of the development that had been taking place towards the close of the Company's rule. Except in Madras and Bombay where provisions continued for a council

<sup>14</sup>The corresponding Act for Madras was passed in 1859 and for Bombay in 1890.

form of government with a governor who was not to be a civilian, the rest of the country remained under the personal rule of either chief commissioners or lieutenant-governors who were recruited from amongst the members of the Indian Civil Service. The subservience of the lieutenant-governors to Governor-General and of the latter to the Secretary of State conduced to marked increase in the degree of despotism. But the regular hierarchy of courts and their freedom from the Executive, the criticism of the Press and the extensive use of the right of interpellation in the Legislative Councils, kept them within the bounds of law.

The expediency of a strong centralised executive was dictated by considerations of social and economic policies. For instance, the land policy of the government directed towards the formation of the record of rights to protect the poorer class against landlords; its famine policy directed towards securing relief to the distressed section of society ; its legislative enactments directed towards checking the rapacious conduct of moneylenders ; and its factory legislation directed towards the protection of workers—all necessitated the intervention of the executive power as the only means to enforce justice. But the progress of education and the middle classes emerging from it tended to prevent the government from getting in direct touch with the mass of the people. Educated Indians in fact pulled in the opposite direction and obliged it to concentrate on their own interest by an extension of the opportunities for educated employment and increased share in the administration of the country. So while on one hand the government took steps to reconstruct the public services so as to absorb more and more of Indian elements, it introduced on the other such measures of financial and administrative decentralisation as might enable them to have a share in the management of local bodies. The political approach to the problems of administrative decentralisation was of course specially advocated<sup>15</sup> by Ripon who in the words of

<sup>15</sup>"As I told you last year we are entering, or rather we have entered, upon a period of change in India : the spread of education, the substitution of legal for discretionary administration, the progress of railways, telegraphs, etc., are now beginning to produce a marked effect upon the people; new ideas are springing up; new aspirations are being called out; and a process has begun which will go on with increasing rapidity from year to year. Such a condition of affairs is one in which the task of Government is beset with difficulties of no light kind; to move too fast is dangerous, but to lag behind is more dangerous still. It is considerations such as these which lead me out to provide a legitimate outlet for the ambitious and aspirations which we have ourselves created by the education, civilization and material progress which we have been the means of introducing into the country; such measures (elected local bodies) will not only have an immediate effect in promoting gradually and safely the political education of the people, which I hold to be a great object of public policy, but will also have the way for further advances in the same direction. You will observe then the question involved in the policy which I have been pressing upon this subject of local self-government is a broad question of political principle." [Northbrook Papers, I.O. MSS. Eur. C. 142 (2) p. 166 C-D]

B.M. Malabari, one of the founders of the Indian National Congress, 'left the Indian a nation.'<sup>16</sup> Ripon's policy resulted in the enactment of the Local Bodies Act in 1885 and paved the ground for administrative decentralisation down to the village level.

Curzon's approach was on the contrary economic, based on a policy of utter disregard for all kinds of intermediaries including the educated classes. He adopted measures to promote industry and commerce, agriculture and cooperatives. The Punjab Land Alienation Act (1900) and his firm no to the Indian National Congress demand to extend the Permanent Settlement to other parts of the country were all designed to enlist the support of agriculturists. Though economically sound, his policy was however politically inexpedient. His administration was on the whole a failure.

### **The Last Phase (1907-47)**

Structurally, the machinery of general administration remained for all practical purposes unchanged during this period except where functional expansion necessitated the creation of a new province, district or sub-division, or the establishment of a new department or the reorganisation of an existing one. The structure evolved during the Company's rule and perfected during 1859-62 came to stay. It was neither wholly Indian nor wholly British. It was partly both. It essentially provided for a strong executive government within the framework of law. The forces that tended to weaken the Executive in the course of the last phase were in the main social and economic. They emerged respectively from educational progress on one hand and economic distress on the other. A union of the two caused political unrest which meant a serious strain on the executive government.

Educationally, the number of scholars studying English rose in about twenty years prior to 1905 from 2,98,000 to 5,05,000 while the number of students passing the annual matriculation examination of Indian universities had increased from 4,286 in 1886 to 8,211 in 1905.<sup>17</sup> In subsequent decades the progress was still more rapid, the total number of graduates and undergraduates rising from 13,551 in 1911 to 1,38,093 in 1939.<sup>18</sup> This rising class of educated Indians became the spearhead of the Indian middle class, developing a common interest and outlook, a common language and behaviour.

The middle class constituted the social background of modern

<sup>16</sup>Malabari to Ilbert, 4/5 May, 1885, I. O. MSS. Eur. D. 594 (18) f, 4 b (Ilbert) Papers).

<sup>17</sup>Minto to Morley, 21 March, 1907, I. O. MSS. Eur. D. 573, para 2.

<sup>18</sup>Misra, B. B. *The Indian Middle Classes; Their Growth in Modern Times*, London, Oxford University Press, p. 304.

Indian nationalism. It consisted of lawyers and government servants, students and teachers, doctors and journalists. Its leadership presented itself as an alternative to the bureaucratic control of the Government. Many of the schools and colleges, especially in Bengal, had by the turn of the century already become centres of seditious activity. The partition of Bengal added fuel to the fire and created an explosive situation, which broke into a widespread revolutionary upsurge in the country. Most of the 'revolutionaries' later went into the making of radical groups in the Congress including the Communists.

Economically, the prospects of the Bengali Hindu middle class who depended on a regular flow of rent from land steadily narrowed on account of rising prices and increasing pressure on land. Their prospects of employment in public offices also shrank when similar classes in other provinces acquired a knowledge of English and became their equals. In the Punjab, on the other hand, the tenancy legislation which government enacted on the turn of the century hit the absentee moneylenders and the professional classes who were mainly Hindus. They were deprived of their opportunity to alienate the lands of the agriculturists, who as in Bengal, were for the most part Muslims. In both the provinces, therefore, the middle class economic discontent expressed itself either in the form of anti-government agitation or Hindu-Muslim riots.

The rise of an independent force of Indian capitalism in the course of the First Great War (1914-18) introduced a new element in the situation. It created a considerable class of industrial workers who received inspiration from the Russian Revolution of 1917. New political parties sprang up to represent the interest of workers and peasants as a spearhead of the nationalist struggle against the imperial government. Communism appeared on the Indian scene as part of an international force aiming at the overthrow of the existing social and economic order. All these forces constituted a serious threat to the machinery of law and order to the dominance of the executive government. The Civil Service was called upon to handle the problems of a magnitude of which it had no experience in the past except perhaps during the Indian Mutiny.

The government approached these problems both politically and administratively. Politically speaking it sought alliance with the landed aristocracy, the intellectual 'Moderates', the Muslims, and such other minorities as found their interest corresponding to that of the Empire. In fulfilment of this policy, it introduced the Morley-Minto Reforms in 1909; recognised in principle the goal of a responsible government for India in 1917; established partial responsibility in the provinces in 1921, and full provincial autonomy in 1937.

But administratively the first few decades of the present century witnessed a series of repressive measures enacted from 1907 onwards to deal with revolutionary crimes. From a study of private papers of some

of the viceroys and the secretaries of state it appears that the bureaucracy as a class had been slow politically to appreciate the problems of Indian administration, even in earlier days. Northbrook, one of the Viceroys for instance, warned Duffering about it before the latter took over as Viceroy in 1885 :

You will soon see... that the Civil Servants, with all their magnificent qualities, have strongly ingrained in their minds, excepting some of the very best of them... that no one but an Englishman can do anything. So that... you will find a good deal of quiet opposition to any efforts you may make to employ largely educated Natives.<sup>19</sup>

Morley, the Secretary of State for India, even went to the length of saying that the bureaucracy "in their hearts believe in nothing but the virtue of will and arbitrary powers".<sup>20</sup> In one of his private letters Morley in fact warned his Viceroy against repressive measures and said : "Cast-iron bureaucracy won't go on for ever, we may be quite sure of that." He asked the Viceroy to watch 'cooly and impartially' and to see that whatever changes might come should come 'without being obstructed'.<sup>21</sup>

The trouble with the bureaucracy, as Morley complained, was not that they did not work. They were able men and they did work hard. They were not found wanting as administrators. But their weakness lay in the fact that they were too immersed in detail to find "leisure to look out of the window and scan the skies and weather and all the business of the elements".<sup>22</sup> In short, they believed in the Curzonian concept of 'efficiency' regardless of the new times breathing a new spirit. In Morley's own words they were "soaked in self-esteem and mutual complements, and armed with a professional contempt and suspicion against the inexpert outsiders".<sup>23</sup>

The difficulty of the Government increased additionally from want of real knowledge about the inner state of things in the districts. Surrounded as the Viceregal Lodge was by civilians, the sources of the Viceroy's means of information could not but be narrow and partial. In a private letter to Minto, Morley actually expressed a sense of helplessness and said : "The Government of India is, and will be, pure

<sup>19</sup>See Misra, *op. cit.*, p. 374.

<sup>20</sup>Morley to Minto, 7 May, 1908, I. O. MSS. Eur. D. 573/3, p. 148.

<sup>21</sup>Morley to Minto, 6 June, 1906, I.O. MSS. Eur. D. 573/1, p. 119.

<sup>22</sup>Morley to Minto, 29 November, 1907, I. O. MSS. Eur. D. 573/2, p. 304. Morley's comment arose from Lajpat Rai's deportation without any evidence or trial, which contributed to revolutionary upsurge in the Punjab.

<sup>23</sup>Morley to Minto, 8 January, 1908, I. O. MSS. Eur. D. 573/3, p. 8.

bureaucracy, and neither you nor I can help it.”<sup>24</sup>

But the Secretary of State did realize the dangers of identifying the government with the bureaucracy. In a subsequent note to Minto he clearly pointed out that the ‘cardinal need’ of British Government in India was “to strengthen and support the influence of the G.G. (Governor-General) against the standing influence of the I.C.S.—hard, persistent, mechanical and a good many other things besides.”<sup>25</sup>

The problem of reforms was perhaps how best to soften the bureaucracy without weakening the political executive. The gradual introduction of the principle of responsible government was therefore designed to make the bureaucracy subject to legislative control within the framework of ‘special responsibilities’ exercisable by the executive government.

Another important feature of the administrative development of this period was that right from the time of Minto, appointment to certain public offices began to be guided by political considerations rather than those of efficiency. In spite of their being no competent muhammadan judge available, the Viceroy appointed one to the Calcutta High Court and another to Lahore, where the muhammadans being in majority wished to have judges of their own denomination. Minto conceded this demand to placate muslim public opinion. The popular ministers appointed under the reformed constitution of 1919 extended the operation of the same principle by their attempt to appoint persons of their caste or religion in the departments over which they presided. The reports which the local governments submitted during 1923-24 on the working of dyarchy contain ample evidence in support of this new trend in Indian administration which tended to partake of the character of the American ‘spoils’ system.

The position of the political executive appointed from amongst the members of an elected legislature, on the other hand, remained generally precarious. In a state of incessant cross-division of race, religion and caste the formation of stable combinations at government level was often impeded, and ministers were obliged to rely largely for support upon the official vote. This weakness of the ministers had the tendency to be reflected in the executive administration of the districts. But the security of the civil servants and their ultimate responsibility to the Secretary of State preserved their *esprit de corps*. They maintained their independence of judgment and action even in the midst of political conflicts. Passions remained for the most part confined to politics and did not generally filter down to administration. In spite of the serious provocations caused by political agitation, and a

<sup>24</sup> Morley to Minto, 14 March, 1907, I. O. MSS. Eur. D. 573/2, p. 52.

<sup>25</sup> Morley to Minto, 3 September, 1908, I. O. MSS. Eur. D. 573/3, p. 258.

series of revolutionary and communist conspiracies to overthrow the government by violent means, the civil servant maintained the equanimity of his mind, discharged his duties fearlessly and advised the government in a dispassionate way. The result was that considerable progress was achieved in the fields of science and technology, health and education, municipalities and local bodies, agriculture and irrigation, co-operation and labour legislation. The object of reforms in these fields was to meet the general demands of all classes of the people so as to ensure an ordered and steady progress within the framework of law.

With the establishment of 'provincial autonomy' in 1937 under the Act of 1935, the century old concept of Central Government functioning as the supervisory and controlling authority and the provincial governments as its executive agents underwent a radical change. The Central Government relaxed its control over the provinces though still retaining in the person of the Governor-General the ultimate responsibility for law and order; the popular governments in the provinces took up the full burden of internal government. The new arrangement of 'central', 'provincial' and 'concurrent' subjects envisaged the functioning of central and provincial governments separately and quasi-independently in their specific spheres of work. All this tended to weaken the Centre and even endanger the national unity. Its pernicious effects were visible in 1946 when the central authority found it difficult to prevent communal violence in Bengal.

The existing link between Indian governments and the Indian states was almost snapped with the creation of the new institution of 'Crown Representative'. A Federal Court of Justice came into existence at Delhi in 1937 to adjudicate on the matters affecting inter-provincial and central-provincial relations. The increasing provincialisation of All-India Services other than the I.C.S. and the Indian Police, which was effected during this period in accordance with the Lee Commission recommendations of the earlier decade (1923-25) also acted in the direction of weakening the Central control.

All this, however, proved temporary. New situations arose which made the Centre all-powerful once again. The provincial constitution was suspended in seven out of the eleven provinces in 1939, the popular ministries in these provinces having resigned on account of Congress differences with British Government on the question of India's participation in World War II. The governors of the provinces took charge of the administration, both legislative and executive, which they continued to discharge to the end of the war with the help of Advisers—a new name given to the old executive councillors. The Governor-General to whom they were directly responsible thus resumed a firm grip over the whole internal administration. This despotic centralisation of authority was further strengthened by the operation of the war-time Defence of

India Rules, by the reinforced arms of law and order brought into play to deal with the 1942 Movement, and by various other factors.

The impact of political agitation, economic discontent, advancement of science and technology and most particularly, World War II caused enormous strain on the administrative machinery resulting in wide expansion in its size and field of operation. The membership of the Viceroy's Executive Council rose from 6 to 14 in course of the war. New departments grew up both in the central and provincial secretariats as well as district and sub-divisional offices. New cadres came to be formed to deal with specialised subjects.

As regards the expansion of departments, the Department of Labour which emerged at the end of the war as the largest single unit in the Government of India Secretariat may serve as a suitable example. Another instance may be quoted from the field of public relation. On the outbreak of War it was felt necessary to centralise the entire publicity and information machinery of the Government of India to counteract enemy propaganda and to explain government policies to the frightened people. With these objects in view the Department of Information and Broadcasting was created in October, 1941, which now forms the most effective organ of public relation. Education, a though provincial subject, also got a distinct departmental status in the Central Secretariat in 1945. Nor was the impact of the War felt only in these fields. With the entry of Japan in the war, India became an important base of Allied operations, both in the forms of military strategy and supply of materials. This led to the creation of the Department of Industries and Civil Supplies at the Centre in 1943 with corresponding limbs down to the district offices. The war also lodged the country in a state of acute food shortage, partly owing to the restricted import and transport facilities, and partly owing to the recurrence of natural calamities. The government had to take up measures to ensure that the overall shortage of foodgrains was shared equally by the various provinces. To handle this gigantic task, a Department of Food was constituted in 1942 in the Central Secretariat, which was placed next year under a separate Food Member. The same department also took up the procurement and purchase of food for the army. Most of these developments, it is true, were primarily directed to the furtherance of British war efforts, probably against the will of the Indian people. But the net result of the war-time vigorous rule was on the whole good for the country. The special and auxiliary police forces created to reinforce law and order helped in the suppression of growing orgies of crime and communal violence in the post-war period.

No less important than the above was the new attention directed by government towards planning and national development. The brief-time Congress Ministries of 1937-39 had made the government

conscious of the economic programme of the Congress, of which planning formed an integral part. The necessity of marshalling Indian resources to meet the war needs brought sharply into relief the precarious agricultural and industrial base of the country. Early in 1941, the Government of India constituted a number of committees to enquire into the ways and means for the proper development of the resources of the country. The Famine Enquiry Commission, set up in 1944 to enquire into the causes of Bengal famine, pointed out that the existing machinery of government though capable of improvement was not thoroughly suited to secure and promote the welfare of the people in the changed circumstances, and that certain amount of planning and development was the need of the hour. The Bengal Administration Enquiry Committee of 1944-45 which followed in its wake confirmed the same belief and presented a clear-cut programme of administrative reform so as to enable the government to undertake developmental work. Thus, it happened that in 1944 the Government of India created a separate Department of Planning and Development to deal with matters relating to post-war reconstruction of India. This department was "the forerunner of the Planning Commission which was set up by the Government of India after attainment of Independence".<sup>26</sup>

Thus the transition "from *laissez faire* attitude to a net-work of government controls and regulations and even positive participation in economic development was made swiftly during the war".<sup>27</sup> Similarly, the groundwork for the abolition of *zamindari* and other post-Independence land reforms was firmly prepared by the Flood Commission on Bengal Land Revenue of 1940.

#### CONCLUSION

Some of the broad conclusions that emerge from this brief narrative of Indian administrative developments are: (1) that the character of the Civil Service did change from time to time to fit in with the objective of the State, (2) that this change was a slow process and did not keep with social and political development, (3) that the core of its training was its emphasis on intellectual and moral culture, and (4) that the independence of its judgment and action flowed not only from its security but also from a superior quality of education. On the turn of the century when attempts began to be made to subject the service to the exigencies of pressure groups in politics, the quality of its character had the risk of being impaired unless the relations between the service and the leadership were to be regulated by recognised principles

<sup>26</sup>*Guide to the Records in the National Archives of India*, 1959, Pt. I, p. 46.

<sup>27</sup>*Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. III, 1957, p. 310.

of public conduct, a spirit of understanding and mutual trust in the interest of public business. Its direct responsibility to London held the balance in its own favour. But the transfer of power in 1947 turned it in favour of the leadership. The immediate responsibility of the service to popular ministries therefore called for a readjustment of their attitude to a degree never felt before.



# The Larger Political Context of Administrative Reforms\*

S.G. Barve

I HAVE been pressed by the editors of the journal to contribute an article for the journal's special issue on "Tasks and Priorities in Administrative Reforms".

The subject is of deep interest to me and of profound contemporary concern. However, on most of the specific issues relating to the contours of the administrative problem I have already published my views in books, speeches and articles. I do not wish to repeat them. I will content myself here with a few observations relating to the broad approach which, I think, must be framed for tackling the administrative complex as we face it today.

## CREDIBILITY OF THE ADMINISTRATION

Let us recall first what I have frequently stated, namely, that I believe that the administrative set-up of the country can be quickly toned up given appropriate political leadership. We have the resources of men and experience and the necessary skills and talent to do so. We hold in our hand all the necessary cards so to say; what is needed is to build up the pack into appropriate suites and play the cards properly. To repeat what I have said elsewhere : "Correctly tackled the machinery of administration in any state and indeed even at the Centre can be greased and tuned up within six months; and there is no reason why there should not be as rapid an improvement in the outer formations and echelons."

As we have witnessed increasingly over the last few years and especially over the last few months and weeks, what is wanted mainly is to build up once again the *credibility* of the public administration. No plans, no policies, no measures can succeed unless there is public faith in

\*From *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XII, No. 3, 1966, pp. 352-55.

the *bona fides*, purposefullness and capacity of the Administration. I do not want to talk here about the structural improvements, the reforms in personnel policies and management, the re-orientation of procedures and attitudes, a proper place for the technician and scientist in modern administration, important as all these are, the details of which can be easily worked out.

Of course, one could say that given a political leadership which has the necessary character, capacity and comprehension the transformation will be achieved. This, however, begs the question just as the question is equally begged by the perfectly valid but inoperable observation that "what is wanted is an improvement of national character". The country cannot always count upon the providential good fortune of throwing up such outstanding and towering leadership.

The perfectly valid proposition that the emergence of a strong and stable party in opposition would furnish the bipartisan assumption of parliamentary democracy and make it work, does not also furnish a solution in the realm of proximate practical politics. Political parties are not formed, nor do they flourish according to textbook theories; they are the resultant of various political forces, personalities, historical developments and accidents. There is no law of nature that just as birds are born with two equal and balanced wings, parliamentary democracies should automatically be equipped with two balanced and comparable political parties which could alternate in office and thus hold each other in check. It would seem as if a multiplex party pattern with one large, somewhat amorphous nationwide party and several other smaller groupings or splinter parties would characterise our political landscape for several years to come.

In this context one has to think of institutional devices which would provide both the necessary stability, balance and the drive to the functioning of parliamentary democracy in our country. And the parliamentary democracy has to put through *under the law* a whole series of social, economic, technological transformations within a short time lest it be swept away by a revolution *against the law* !

#### ORGANISATIONAL SET-UP

I have two thoughts to suggest in this connection. The first is that some steps must be taken immediately to restore faith in the *bona fides* of the public administration and the integrity of public life; second, that means must be devised whereby pressures of parliamentary opinion will be focussed constructively on the framing and execution of governmental policies so as to impart them the necessary drive, make performance match up to promise and pronouncement, and to promote a wider sense of participation by political elements not in office.

With reference to the first point I would urge the need for the

immediate introduction of the machinery of an "Ombudsman" to ensure proper behaviour, especially at the political and senior administrative levels. This is a delicate task and must be so performed that while it ensures 'asepsis', it does not inhibit or delay the acts or processes of decision-making. I would not go into the details here beyond stating that, I believe, this can be done.

To sterilise public life from graft, corruption and to maintain the asepsis, certain other steps may also be necessary relating to measures for reducing the cost of and availability of large funds for electioneering, etc. Various specific suggestions in this regard have already been made.

Apart from these measures of sterilisation of public life, it is necessary to make several adaptations to the arrangements and procedures relating to the functioning of Parliament in order that the Administration functions purposefully in the light of an informed and articulated parliamentary opinion and its invigilation. Parliament has emerged recently as a very powerful entity on the political scene. It is necessary to ensure that its interests and energies are focussed into fruitful and constructive directions and not lost in endless disputes of a litigious or procedural character. Once the machinery of an Ombudsman as a means is at hand for verifying the *bona fides* of administrative action, the credibility of the public administration should be restored and the motivation for a merely litigious or procedural disputation should have disappeared.

The details would need to be carefully worked out but, I have a feeling that there ought to be a great deal more of a systematic setting up of Parliamentary committees in different sectors of public policy and administration so that the formulation and implementation of policies may be done in greater understanding with and in the light of well-informed and well-focussed parliamentary opinion. In a one-party democracy it is inevitable that feelings of frustration, disinterest and even irresponsibility should be generated on one hand and of smugness, complacency and 'injured innocence' on the other. We have to adapt the working of parliamentary democracy to our special requirements if it is to survive the strains of our conditions and eventually to succeed. The British prototype, while useful as a general guide-line, may need considerable modification in detail to meet our particular circumstances.

The British prototype, with balanced parties, a compact administrative complex and established standards of integrity in public life—besides, of course much less massive or compelling challenges to—face-functions under the general single safeguard that the government goes out of office, if anything goes seriously wrong in the administration. When such a recourse is impracticable, we must be prepared to devise a whole series of other checks and safeguards and forge lesser levels of deterrence and furnish plans of involvement and participation between those

who hold office and those who have no prospect of doing so. A confrontation between a government undeterred by the fear of a fall and an opposition uninspired by the promise of power is basically incongruous to the smooth working of parliamentary democracy. It is bound to lead to distortion and huddles. One has to think out devices to adapt the Parliamentary institutions to the special requirements of the country. The British prototype as we see it today is itself the product of evolution and adjustments made in response to the needs of the situation. The Select Committee on Estimates for instance is a comparatively recent innovation. The Select Committee on Nationalised Industries and the new institution of Parliamentary Commissioners are very recent adaptations made to meet the wider needs of the modern welfare state. These are all basically devices to secure the interplay of political elements in opposition on the detailed conduct of government at levels of confrontation short of the ultimate one of replacing the government itself which cannot for obvious reasons be lightly invoked. The contrast of Indian conditions with the British is far more sharp than that of British conditions of today with their conditions a generation ago. We must have the courage and ingenuity to graft on the main corpus of the parliamentary tradition institutional arrangements that will adapt it in its detailed working to our specific needs and challenges while preserving inviolate the spirit of Parliamentary democracy. These needs had been submerged and obliterated under the tidal swell of post-Independence years and the providential dispensation of an overwhelming and universally respected personality like Jawaharlal Nehru at the helm of the State. As the tide has receded the rocks are being exposed and we must reckon with them in steering the ship of State.

Maybe, it may be given to us to make such adaptations successfully and while departing from some letter of the book of words show the way of working parliamentary democracy in the spirit, for our own advantage and as a possible example to other newly emerging countries.

Restoration of integrity to public life and the evolving of a working arrangement for parliamentary democracy—both these are matters which obviously need a great deal more of careful thinking out. I have, however, ventured to dash out these thoughts in the hope that they might stimulate further thinking and discussion.

The stakes involved are indeed very large. Perhaps the decisive battles of democracy and free institutions in this century are being fought in our country at this particular juncture.



# **Fifteen Years of Administrative Reforms An Overview\***

**Ajit M. Banerjee**

THE PAST fifteen years of independence have witnessed numerous changes in the administrative organisation and work methods and procedures of the Central Government—changes that have been gradual and not much perceptible, but which, all the same and contrary to the common belief, add up to a substantial measure of administrative reforms. Nevertheless, a good majority of people in India today express dissatisfaction with the government's policies and achievements, and this by implication reflects dissatisfaction with the administrative reforms already carried out or in the offing. It is true that such criticisms must necessarily be viewed in the context of the increase in people's expectations as a result of the installation of democratic institutions and the advent of national five year plans of development. That, however, in no way diminishes the importance of ensuring that administrative organisation and practices are fully adapted and attuned to not only the abstract requirements of national planning but also to the popular needs and expectations. The people's dissatisfaction has in recent times, as voiced in Parliament, been more pronounced on the issues of administrative delays, corruption in government, and shortfalls or failures in the implementation of the plan projects.

Some of the basic issues relevant to a fruitful discussion of administrative reforms at the Centre, during the past fifteen years, are :

1. Have the administrative reforms been adequate in terms of their character and scope to meet the demands of the needs of democracy, planned development and the people's needs and expectations ?

2. (i) To what extent have administrative reforms been pragmatic in character ?
- (ii) What are the areas in which new administrative reforms are most needed ?
3. To what extent does the existing machinery which the Government of India has for administrative reform itself need to be reformed and reorganised ?

For judging the adequacy and efficacy and pragmatic character of administrative reforms undertaken so far, it seems essential to touch upon the reports of different experts on Central Administration during the last 15 years, to survey the major recommendations contained in the three five year plans, and further touch upon the main areas and directions in which administrative reforms have actually taken place. An attempt has also been made to examine to what extent the existing machinery for administrative reforms itself needs to be reorganised. The present article is concerned only with the administrative reforms in the Central Government.<sup>1</sup> Also the article is not intended to cover reforms in the Central Government industrial and service-supplying undertakings.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE SURVEYS AND REFORMS SINCE INDEPENDENCE

##### *Administrative Surveys and Reforms (1947-1956)*

The inspiration for and compulsion to administrative reforms during the last decade and a half have been felt within the Central Government as a result of the assumption by it of several new developmental and welfare functions, the increase in the scale of administrative operations, both traditional and new; and the tremendous rise in the expectations of the people in the wake of the attainment of independence and the establishment of a democratic government wedded to the ideals of a welfare state and a socialist pattern of society; other factors have been the need for greater association of the people with, and their participation in, the administrative process to facilitate planning from the bottom and speedy and effective implementation of national plan; the process of democratic institutions and practices and

<sup>1</sup>During the years 1947-62, there were several reorganisations of different ministries and departments, and also many changes were made in the allocation of work among them. While the latter were mostly prompted by considerations of homogeneity of work in a department, the former were generally effected to accommodate changes in the composition of the Union Cabinet.

There was also a considerable proliferation in the size of the government machinery, and a sizable increase in the number of advisory bodies attached to different ministries. These have been excluded from the purview of the article.

the impact of idealism inherent in the Indian culture, i.e., the desire for theoretical perfection in all thinking (though such perfection may in itself obstruct the realization of the very objective).

During the period of our attaining the demision status and the first two years of independence, the Government was mostly preoccupied with problems arising out of independence and partition which included the shortage of personnel due to the retirement of the European officers and administrative re-adjustments as a result of the incorporation of princely Indian states. A similar problem of administrative re-adjustment arose in the wake of reorganisation of states (1956). To investigate the question of personnel shortages, better utilisation of the available manpower and improvement of methods of work in the Central Secretariat,<sup>2</sup> a six-member committee was appointed by the Government of India in July 1947. These years also witnessed the establishment of the Indian Administrative Service to replace the Indian Civil Service; the creation of the Indian Police Service, the Indian Foreign Service and the Central Secretariat Service; and the setting up of a training school for the I.A.S. probationers.

A comprehensive review of the working of the machinery of the Central Government in general was undertaken only towards the end of 1949 by N. Gopalaswamy Ayyangar.<sup>3</sup> In July 1951, the Planning Commission, which had been set up in March 1950 "to formulate a plan for the most effective and balanced utilisation of the country's resources", asked A.D. Gorwala<sup>4</sup> to assess how far the existing administrative machinery and methods were adequate to meet the requirements of planned development. Gorwala's report served as the basis for the formulation of certain crucial proposals for the reform of the administration, which were later included in the First Five Year Plan. Two other important reports which had a significant impact during 1952-56 on thinking about administrative reforms in government circles and the educated public were the Appleby Reports to the Government of India in 1953 and 1956. Appleby's first report<sup>5</sup> dealt more with changes in the basic principles and concepts including the Indian administrative organisation and practice and less with the details of the administrative machinery and methods; this report was inspired by a freshness of outlook and a deep insight into the administrative

<sup>2</sup>*Report of the Secretariat Reorganisation Committee* (Chairman: Girija Shanker Bajpai), Government of India Press, New Delhi, August, 1947.

<sup>3</sup>*Report on Reorganisation of the Machinery of Government*, Government of India Press, New Delhi, August, 1949.

<sup>4</sup>*Report on Public Administration*, Planning Commission, New Delhi, 1951.

<sup>5</sup>Paul H. Appleby, *Public Administration in India : Report of a Survey*, Government of India, O & M Division, New Delhi, 1953.

problems of the country. In his second report<sup>6</sup> Appleby proposed several suggestions for streamlining organisation, work procedures, recruitment, training and relations between administration and Parliament, administration and the Planning Commission, and administration and the Comptroller & Auditor-General. During this period, the Estimates Committee<sup>7</sup> of the First Lok Sabha also showed special interest in administrative reform in the Central Government.

### *The First Five Year Plan*

The First Five Year Plan, published in July 1951, stressed the importance of assessing the requirements of scientific, technical and administrative personnel, improvement in the quality of recruitment to the administrative services and in the procedures for their selection, the need for administrative leadership and the responsibility of the higher ranks of public servants for improving administration, incentives for good work, and periodical assessment of the officers of the I.C.S. and I.A.S., and establishment of joint 'development' cadres and similar other co-operative arrangements between the Centre and the States; improvement of in-service training arrangements, the importance of careful grounding in revenue and development administration for the probationers of the administrative services, the organisation of refresher courses for senior administrative officers, etc.; the establishment of O. & M. units at the Centre and in the States; improvement of supervision and inspection; better human relations; review of methods of financial control; greater attention to financial implications at the stage of planning of projects, and allocation of priorities; improvement of efficiency rating methods so as to facilitate promotion of outstanding officers; and systematic evaluation of results as a normal administrative practice.<sup>8</sup>

The actual advent of development administration through the First Five Year Plan (1951-56) saw the establishment of some new agencies charged with the responsibility of administrative evaluation or reforms. In August, 1952, the National Development Council was set up, *inter alia*, to recommend measures for the achievement of the aims and targets set out in the National Plan including measures to

<sup>6</sup>Reorganisation of India's Administrative System with special Reference to Administration of Government's Industrial and Commercial Enterprises, Government of India, O. & M. Division, New Delhi, 1956.

<sup>7</sup>Estimates Committee, *Reorganisation of the Secretariat & Departments of the Government of India*, Second Report, 1950-51, Parliament Secretariat, New Delhi, Feb. 1951; and Estimates Committee, *Administrative, Financial & Other Reforms*, Ninth Report, 1953-54, Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi, May, 1954.

<sup>8</sup>Planning Commission, *First Five Year Plan*, Government of India, New Delhi, 1951.

improve the efficiency of the administrative services and to mobilise the effort and resources of the nation in support of the Plan, to promote common economic policies in all vital sectors and to secure the balanced and rapid development of all parts of the country. In the same month, the Programme Evaluation Organisation was set up in the Planning Commission to make a systematic and periodic assessment of the methods and results of the Community Development Programme. A Special Reorganisation Unit (Economy Division) was established the same year in the Department of Expenditure of the Ministry of Finance to make an objective review of the organisation and personnel strength of the various ministries and their attached offices. This Unit was reorganised in 1958, to incorporate the use of work study techniques for determining work loads and staff complements and overhauling procedures. Since January 1960, the S.R.U. has been given a three-year programme of work studies covering the entire Secretariat and important offices. The Central O. & M. Division and the Indian Institute of Public Administration came into being in March 1954; the creation of these two high-level institutions was designed as a 'double fork' to attack the problem of administrative delays and ineffectiveness from both within and outside the Government. A new scheme for the Central Secretariat Clerical Service, which embraces all clerical posts in ministries and other agencies participating in the scheme, was drawn up and put into effect in May 1954. Since 1954, staff councils have been developed in central ministries. Each ministry now has two staff councils—a Senior Staff Council for Class II & III employees and a Junior Staff Council for lower establishment. In August 1955, an Administrative Vigilance Division was set up in the Ministry of Home Affairs to render assistance and to coordinate the activities of the ministries of the Central Government in their campaign against corruption in the public services.

Two new areas of governmental activity during the period of the First Five Year Plan were industrial enterprises and community development programme. These led to institutional innovations such as statutory corporations and government companies, multi-number boards and commissions and project administration.

#### *The Second Five Year Plan*

The Second Five Year Plan (1956-61) emphasised the need to face critical administrative responsibilities in economic development programming. It enumerated the principal administrative tasks as : ensuring integrity in administration ; building up administrative and technical cadres and providing incentives and opportunities for creative service ; continuously assessing requirements of personnel in relation to the tasks to be undertaken ; organising large-scale training programmes

in all fields and mobilising the available training resources ; devising speedy, efficient and economic methods of work, providing for continuous supervision, and arranging for objective evaluation of methods and results at regular intervals. It also stressed the need for affording opportunities to officials at all levels for exercising maximum responsibility ; schemes for executive development ; improving personnel with a sense of speed and urgency ; the necessity of developing administrative talent in all fields ; and the import of human relations on the activities of government.<sup>9</sup>

The significant developments from the point of view of administrative reforms during the period of the Second Five Year Plan (1956-61) were : setting up of the Committee on Plan Projects by the National Development Council for evolving suitable forms of organisation, methods, standards and techniques for achieving economy and reducing costs (1956) ; the second 'emergency' recruitment as a result of the post-Independence depletion of services to fill up the gap in the I.A.S., the I.P.S., and Central Services (1956) ; the report of the Public Services (Qualifications for Recruitment) Committee recommending that a university degree should not be necessary for entry into clerical services (1956) ; Estimates Committee's twenty-first Report on the composition of the Planning Commission;<sup>10</sup> establishment of the Administrative Staff College for the training of senior members of government and industry (1957) ; a pass in the personality test declared no longer necessary for direct recruitment to the I.A.S. and allied services (1957) ; announcement of the experiment with 'Pilot Section' and 'Jumping Levels'<sup>11</sup> in the Central Secretariat (1956-57) ; appointment of 'internal' economy committees in the ministries by the Central Economy Board to keep a watch over economy and efficiency (1957) ; institution of a training course in the techniques of work study by the O. & M. Division & S.R.U. (1958) ; appointment of an Officer on Special Duty to enquire into matters of services organisation and training (1958) ; the establishment of a National Institute of Community Development and National Productivity Council (1958) ; the creation of Central Directorate of Manpower in the Ministry of Home Affairs (1958) ; delegation of financial powers to ministries and departments (1958) ; creation of Industrial Management Pool (1958-59) ; creation of central cadres for health, legal advice, information service, scientific personnel pool and bulk selection by the U.P.S.C. in the engineering services (1959) ; formation of the

<sup>9</sup>Planning Commission, *Second Five Year Plan*, Government of India, New Delhi, 1956.

<sup>10</sup>Estimates Committee, *Planning Commission, Twenty-First Report (Second Lok Sabha)* 1957-58, Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi, April 1958.

<sup>11</sup>Organisation & Methods Division, *Third Annual Report (1956-57)*; Cabinet Secretariat, New Delhi, May 1957, pp. 13-17.

National Academy of Administration with a foundational course for probationers of all class I services (1959), appointment of a part-time Director of Training (1960); constitution of Indian Supplies and Inspection Service and Cost Accounts Pool (1961); and appointment of a Secretaries' Committee on Administration (1961); having continuous responsibility for promoting administrative efficiency and promoting administrative leadership. The Committee is intended to supplement the existing arrangements by providing standing machinery for locating administrative deficiencies, facilitating decisions for their removal and assisting in speedy action on the decisions.<sup>12</sup> A little earlier, the Estimates Committee, reviewing the growth of civil non-plan expenditure in its ninety-second report, pointed out that the increase in the 'administrative and executive' category and 'clerical' category was above the normal growth. The Committee also emphasised the need for an economy drive and a programme of work studies in the ministries.<sup>13</sup>

#### *Report of the Second Pay Commission*

The most important report during the Second Plan period, which constituted an historic administrative document in India, was that of the Second Central Pay Commission.<sup>14</sup> Though the Commission was primarily concerned with questions of emoluments and conditions of service of the Central Government employees, it made certain recommendations of far-reaching significance on some crucial aspects of personnel administration in the Central Government; these suggestions were mostly based on some objective studies carried out by its member-secretary earlier as officer on special duty in the Ministry of Home Affairs. They briefly were: emphasis on merit for promotion to senior posts; introduction of a system of promotion by special competitive examination to provide additional opportunity of entry by class II & III services to class I services; drawing of administrative personnel from as wide a field as possible and fuller use of the abilities and the diversity of experience of the officers of Central Services Class I (non-technical); heading of technical departments by a secretary having a technical background in a particular field and of departments with considerable amount of technical as well as administrative work by a secretary who is either a technical officer with proved administrative capacity or a generalist administrator; grant of study leave to scientific, administrative and technical personnel even for studies not clearly and

<sup>12</sup>Memorandum No. 2/28/61-O. & M., Department of Cabinet Affairs, Government of India, August, 1961.

<sup>13</sup>Estimates Committee, *Growth of Civil Non-Plan Expenditure*, Ninety-Second Report. (Second Lok Sabha) 1959-60, Lok Sabha Secretariat, New Delhi, April, 1960.

<sup>14</sup>Ministry of Finance, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry on Emoluments & Conditions of Service of Central Government Employees 1958-59*, Government of India, August, 1959.

directly linked with a civil servant's work, which however, would improve his capability as a civil servant ; raising the age of superannuation from 55 to 58 ; establishment of departmental joint councils, with provision for compulsory arbitration of some specified matters, and abolition of the existing system of classification of services into four classes in the interest of creating a feeling among civil servants of belonging to a common public service.

The above recommendations of the Commission show that it was prompted by an unbiased, liberal and pragmatic approach to the administrative problems.

### *The Third Five Year Plan*

The formulation of the recommendations on administrative reforms for the Third Five Year Plan was preceded by special studies undertaken in the Planning Commission and the Organisation and Methods Division of the Cabinet Secretariat.<sup>15</sup> These studies discussed the existing weaknesses and suggested measures for strengthening of administration during the Third Plan period, and were more in the nature of a general distillation of the past experience rather than special empirical researches on specific administrative problems and difficulties encountered in the implementation of the Second Plan.

The continuing task of development administration is one of identifying the needs, laying down objectives and policies, translating them into action programmes, implementing the programmes with speed and efficiency, and engaging in constant preparation for and creating a climate of work improvement with emphasis on organisational goals and the best human relations possible. The Third Five Year Plan, therefore, lists the principal objectives to be realised in public administration as : (1) formulation of policies in clear-cut terms by government and ensuring continuity in giving effect to them ; (2) clear assignment of responsibilities for implementation with full appreciation of the objectives to be achieved at every level including minister, secretary and head of department, and no interference with the decisions of the individual public servants within the field assigned

<sup>15</sup>The Planning Commission in *Papers on Measures for Strengthening of Administration*, suggested that the reform in administration should be much more action-oriented. To this end : (a) government's policy directives should be set out in bold specific terms; (b) resort to committees, groups, conferences, etc., should be reduced drastically; (c) success or failure must be judged strictly by the test of result; and (d) besides careful selection and training, those entrusted with key jobs must stay long enough on them. The proposals by O & M Division covered : (a) techniques for fostering initiative, ability to programme and responsibility of individual officers; (b) increase in capacity for improvement in performance; and (c) creativity in administration, Organisation & Methods Division, Cabinet Secretariat, August 1961.

to him by law and regulations ; (3) ensuring everyday efficiency with speed and prompt disposal, including (a) proper training of personnel, especially middle-grade, (b) simplification of procedures through systematic work studies, and (c) effective supervision of work at each level ; (4) continuing administrative leadership for securing steady improvement in administrative efficiency and standards ; and (5) ensuring in respect of important construction projects that the best results accrue for the expenditure incurred and there is integrity and economy at all points.<sup>16</sup>

Some significant administrative changes since the launching of the Third Plan were further decentralisation of financial control hitherto exercised by the Ministry of Finance ; establishment of Central Economic and Statistical Services ; the decision to revive All-India Services for engineering, forestry and health ; the transference of the control of the Ministry of Home Affairs over the staff belonging to three Central Secretariat Services up to and including the level of section officer to the administrative ministries concerned ; and the establishment of a government sponsored Institute of Applied Manpower Research.

*Reports of the Committee on Administration  
and the Krishnamachari Report*

The two important documents on administrative reforms published during the years 1961-62 were : *Statement on Administrative Procedure*<sup>17</sup> laid on the Table of Parliament by the Prime Minister on August 10, based on a progress report of the Secretaries' Committee on Administration and the *Report on Indian and State Administrative Services and Problems of District Administration* by V. T. Krishnamachari.<sup>18</sup> The former outlined the intentions of the Government of India about the introduction of a series of administrative reforms, e.g., flexibility in the pattern of departmental organisation, greater autonomy to secure greater responsibility on the part of the executive agencies for the results obtained, reduction of conferences and group meetings ; keeping officials in key positions in their jobs for at least 5 years to enable them to produce the results expected of them ; simplification and improvement of work procedure making for delay in decision-making and implementation ; training in supervisory techniques and work study for all types of personnel in service ; systematically worked out incentive

<sup>16</sup>Planning Commission, *Third Five Year Plan*, Government of India, New Delhi, 1961.

<sup>17</sup>*The Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. VII, July-September, 1961. pp. 264-70.

<sup>18</sup>Published by Planning Commission, New Delhi, August, 1962.

schemes ; specific training assignments to develop individual and group responsibility ; measures to foster initiative and ability to programme adequately and to increase the capacity for effective and improved performance ; formulation of an annual programme by each Head of Department to combat and reduce corruption ; laying down by the Head of Department of time-limits for disposal of letters, applications and petitions received from the public, devising of national expressions of courtesy in dealings with the public ; and measures for better planning and programming of projects.

Krishnamachari, in his report, made several recommendations for increasing the intake of direct recruits to the I.A.S. to meet future needs ; improving pre-entry training at the National Academy of Administration and probationary training in the State ; and organising refresher courses for I.A.S. Officers with 6 to 7 years' service. He, however, opposed the suggestion of the Ministry of Home Affairs, in pursuance of the recommendations made by the Second Pay Commission, to make some direct recruitment to the I.A.S. through a special limited competitive examination on the ground that the I.A.S. cadre was meant primarily to provide officers for senior posts.

A second statement, based on the progress report of the Committee on Administration, was placed before the Lok Sabha by the Prime Minister on April 22, 1963. It drew attention to the progress made in the matter of simplifying rules and regulations, registers, returns and reports, and procedure in house-keeping sections ; training in work study techniques imparted to government officials ; studies completed or undertaken for economy in staff and equipment ; reduction in costs and modern methods of programming ; progress control in building and construction projects ; locating procedural bottlenecks and delays ; the relationship between scientific institutions and the administrative ministries ; and time content and costs of meeting.<sup>19</sup>

#### •ADEQUACY OF REFORMS

The preceding account of contemporary administrative reforms at the Centre shows that administrative readjustments and improvements have been mainly undertaken or contemplated in matters like administrative coordination ; financial decentralisation ; relations between the secretariat and field agencies ; work methods and procedures ; services organisation ; arrangement for recruitment and training ; emoluments and other conditions of service ; work incentives ; public relations ; people's participation in or association with projects imple-

<sup>19</sup>*The Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. IX, No. 2, April-June, 1963, pp. 267-271.

mentation ; anti-corruption laws and regulations ; shouldering of responsibility for results by individual officials and heads of departments ; planning and programming of projects ; budgeting ; separation of accounts and audit, etc. A beginning has been made in recent years towards programme budgeting by inclusion, for some projects, in the explanatory memorandum accompanying the budget, of some details about physical targets to be achieved ; and standards for significant reduction in costs of construction projects have been set by the Committee on Plan Projects. The S.R.U. has successfully attempted to prescribe work loads and staff complements and reducing the tendency towards staff proliferation.

Though these reforms cover a vast array of administrative matters, their compass has been too narrow and their pace too slow, to make for dramatic improvement in the processes of administration. Take for instance the O. & M. work. While the Central O. & M. Division has done some useful work in simplifying and standardising work procedures, there is a general feeling in government circles that it has not been able to effect any substantial procedural improvements. One of the reported deficiencies in O. & M. Division as in the S.R.U. has been the absence of any professional administrative analysis in their personnel ; they have all along been mostly staffed by officers drawn from the Central Secretariat Service. Nor, as we have seen, has there been generally any basic change in the forms of organisation or methods of work ; the administrative reforms have mostly been in the nature of *ad hoc* improvements of the existing structure and practices in response to the need for them. While the government has theoretically conceded the necessity for flexibility in organisational patterns and methods of work, in actual practice new organisation forms and work methods have still to be evolved. The experiment with the 'pilot section' project—a new type of basic secretariat unit—was abandoned half way, as the conditions for its success were not ensured from the beginning.

The question of long-term planning of administrative reforms or reorganisation to meet the requirements of developmental plans is closely linked with the existing machinery for administrative reform. This machinery at present comprises a cell in the Planning Commission, the Committee on Plan Projects, the Special Reorganisation Unit, the Central O. & M. Division and the Secretaries' Committee on Administration. These units have devoted considerable thought to questions of administrative re-adjustments and improvements, but they do not seem to have evolved an overall perspective of clear-cut objectives for planning of administrative reforms on a long-term basis. The work of these agencies is mostly coordinated through interlocking membership, meetings and conferences and informal contacts.

There is a growing feeling in government circles that the machinery for administrative reforms itself needs reform and reorganisation to provide for an integrated approach and planned schemes of administrative change. Curiously enough while the formulation of different programmes for the Second and Third Five Year Plans was preceded by expert study groups, no such study group was set up to assess the requirements of administrative change necessary for the effective implementation of the projects included in these two Five Year Plans.

Another important deficiency in the existing form, mode, and manner of administrative reform concerns lack of research. Little use seems to have been made of the modern researches in the social sciences, especially social psychology, cultural anthropology, group dynamics, organisation theory and operations research.

Again, the main perspective of administrative reforms hitherto has been that of perfecting organisation and procedures on the lines of what is known as the scientific management approach. Such a mechanistic approach, despite certain measures for improvement of personnel administration (which were also conceived with a bias in favour of scientific management), has obviously left out, for all practical purposes, the human relations side of administration. There seems to be a widespread belief that once perfect organisation and work methods have been devised, what is necessary for achieving the results is only to pass orders. There has been too much emphasis on concepts like unity of command, span of control, hierarchical structures and streamlining of procedures and too little on reorientating the attitudes of administrators and developing their capacities to deal effectively with people so as to ensure effective results. That perfection of organisation and work methods is by itself not sufficient to achieve results seems to have evaded the attention of the higher ranks responsible for making administrative policies and rules.

Sufficient attention has also not been paid to adapting the organisation of the central secretariat for effective formulation of public policies—which is its primary function. A recent study by the O. & M. Division has revealed that 30 per cent of the staff in the Central Secretariat is employed on house-keeping functions.

#### NEW PERSPECTIVES

##### *Areas of Improvement*

The main directions in which the policies of the Central Government in respect to administrative reforms need re-orientation appear to be as follows :

1. Undertaking a series of comprehensive empirical studies: (i) to find out how and to what extent human attitudes and human

relations within administrative organisations affect the attainment of results, in the process of the implementation of schemes or carrying out of orders ; (ii) to work out in detail the nature, form and extent of administrative change necessitated by each Five Year Plan ; (iii) to collect fuller information on how policy decisions are made in the central secretariat, to what extent they are made on the basis of empirical data ; and how far the different alternatives are taken into account ; (iv) to determine the extent of the effectiveness of administrative reforms already undertaken ; (v) to evaluate the nature, extent and scope of effectiveness of the present administrative leadership and coordination devices ; and (vi) to determine the effectiveness of generalists and specialists as heads of functional departments.

2. To devise detailed schemes for fixing responsibility for results on individual officers and for linking promotion to senior positions with effectiveness of the officers in terms of obtaining results.
3. To provide for opportunities, both on the job and by grant of special study leave, for the development of the human relations skills and conceptual skills for senior officers.
4. To ensure that each ministry and department has effective institutional arrangements for : (a) Planning of programmes and evaluation of results, (b) Assessment and review of public policies; this would require placing at the disposal of each secretary a complement of policy planning staff and providing staff aid with subject-matter specialisation to ministers, (c) Working out details of administrative reforms (including schemes of delegation) to meet the needs of the particular policies, programmes and circumstances of a department. A good deal of the ineffectiveness of the current administrative reforms is reported to be due to their being couched in general terms and to the failure on the part of the ministries and departments to work out details for their specific application.
5. Streamlining and reorganisation of the machinery for administrative reforms in the Central Government for purposes of planning reforms on a long-term basis and in an integrated manner and for carrying out detailed empirical studies commensurate in number, scope and depth with the requirements of planned development.
6. Securing necessary technical assistance (expert advice) from abroad for the planning and carrying out of these empirical studies.
7. Report of the people's complaints about administrative delays

and to combat their unwarranted fears that their petitions and requests do not receive prompt attention and fair and impartial treatment. Here it may be emphasised that the government would have nothing to lose by the appointment of a functionary like *Ombudsman* who would receive complaints direct from the public, investigate them, and intervene in the processes of government, where indicated. He would be responsible directly to Parliament. If all is well with the working of the government ministries and departments, the hesitation on the part of the government to create such an institution is little understood among the people.

8. Experimentation with new organisational forms and work methods.
9. Measures for eliminating the existing overemphasis on precedents and on formal compliance with rules and regulations.
10. The appointment of a high-powered commission on administrative reorganisation; its appointment seems essential considering that administrative reforms during the past fifteen years of independence have been inadequate in terms of adapting the administrative organisations and civil service attitudes to the needs of developmental planning, there has to date been no overall review of governmental machinery. Efforts in this direction have been mostly piecemeal and sporadic.
11. Adoption of a Code of Ethics for Ministers, Members of Parliament, and party executives.
12. Greater professionalisation of the public services to inculcate pride of good work among the civil servants and to set standards of professional conduct.
13. Measures for improving administrative leadership.
14. Devising new means of more effective coordination and less of cross-references.
15. Working out a detailed scheme for more effective utilisation of specialists.

#### *The Fourth Plan and Administrative Change*

Administration under planned development is primarily a 'resource'. The speed and effectiveness of implementation of plans of development are conditioned not only by financial and natural resources but also by administrative talent. Though the three Plans contain innumerable recommendations covering almost the entire gamut of administration, they do not appear to have been formulated on a fuller consideration of administration in its totality as a resource. It is here that the approach to administration under the Fourth Plan needs a fundamental reorientation and re-adjustment. The administration

should not only be considered as a vital resource crucial to planned development, it must also be conceived as a resource which is not static but dynamic. "Administration For Change", which is considered to have so far eluded the planners in India, needs to be given proper attention. A beginning in this direction may perhaps be made under the Fourth Plan. Furthermore, research into building up a theory or theories of administrative change and growth seems indispensable today for attuning administration to the needs of the different stages of the development of the economy.

The concept of 'Administration For Change' throws up another important issue—that of the acceptance of change by the existing administration itself. Generally, the functioning of administration, with its vast ramifications of bureaucratic interests, and traditional outlook, attitudes and behaviour of working, may offer resistance to administrative change; any attempt at change brings into play other factors which tend to offset that change. A significant administrative problem, therefore, during the Fourth Plan, will involve breaking this resistance and re-orienting the attitudes of civil servants at different levels towards a willing acceptance of change.

#### CONCLUSION

In the last analysis, administrative efficiency, like labour productivity, is a matter of human attitudes. Good and balanced organisation and efficient procedures are of help, but they are not the final determinants of efficiency and effectiveness. Viewed in this perspective the crucial need today in the matter of administrative reforms is in the area of human motivation and human relations, which are the functions of several factors such as monetary and non-monetary incentives, morale, and the net-work of human interaction, and influence. Also involved are goal delineation, decision-making and communication—both formal and informal—within an administrative organisation and between that organisation and its environment. In laying down job duties and work loads and in structuring an administrative organisation, it would be worthwhile for the administrative reformers and analysts in India to take into consideration the requirements of motivational and behavioural factors and patterns, the sub-cultural traits of the work groups, the forces and factors making for resistance to administrative change and the vital points where actual power is located as against formal authority. These behavioural aspects are no less important than the mechanistic concepts of unity of command, span of control, precedents and rules; and unless they are paid due attention, it is doubtful if any administrative reforms or reorganisation, based largely on the scientific manage-

ment approach, will effectively and comprehensively improve the operations of government.

What we have hitherto seen are administrative reforms as improvisations, based on general administrative surveys and not detailed empirical studies, amounting to a bit of tinkering here and there with our ponderous and monolithic administrative machine. What is now required is an integrated effort to think through the problems of government reform in the broadest sense, utilising not only the wisdom of civil servants—wisdom gained, to be certain, in the hard school of practical experience—but also making full use of all the new tools which social science has placed at our disposal.



# **Administrative Reforms Commission: Perspective and Findings\***

**B.S. Narula**

THE SETTING up of the (all-India) Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) on January 5, 1966, by the Government of India, was a historic landmark in the attempt at administrative reorganisation and improvement which had started soon after the advent of planning in the early fifties. This effort gathered momentum after 1963 in the face of the administrative lag and inadequacies revealed by the midterm appraisal of the Third Five-Year Plan. A number of committees and working groups went into various aspects of administrative reforms. But the overall impact was hardly significant. When the ARC came on the scene, considerable thinking had been done regarding the nature of administrative problems and the directions of changes needed.<sup>1</sup> There were, however, two perspectives which had not received adequate attention in the earlier attempts at proposing reforms. These, as mentioned in the ARC's terms of reference, were: "making public administration a fit instrument for carrying out the social and economic policies of the government and achieving social and economic goals of development" and making the administration 'responsive to the people'. Implicit in the Commission's terms of reference were two additional objectives, namely, promotion of national integration and maintenance of efficient standards of administration throughout the country.<sup>2</sup> The Government Resolution constituting the ARC, listed 10 specific areas of inquiry, extending over the entire gamut of administration from the village to the Union Cabinet. It was,

\*From *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XVII, No. 4, 1971, pp. 634-60.

<sup>1</sup>For details, see J.N. Khosla, "Administrative Reforms in India" in Hahn Been Lee and Abelardo G. Samonte (eds.), *Administrative Reforms in Asia*, Manila, EROPA, 1970, pp. 270-286.

<sup>2</sup>See item 3 (ii) of the Schedule to the Ministry of Home Affairs (Department of Administrative Reforms), Government of India Resolution, New Delhi, dated the 5th January, 1966.

perhaps, for the first time that the subjects of machinery for planning, Centre-State relationships and redress of citizens' grievances were the subject of inquiry by a high-level reforms body. Underlying the establishment of the ARC was the idea that proposals for reforming the administration needed to be conceived in an integrated and overall perspective for the country as a whole and in terms of all the main aspects of administration.

The ARC set up 20 study teams, 13 working groups and 1 task force. It gave 20 reports to the government. An attempt is made in this article to present some of the more important trends in the thinking of the ARC and their relevance to contemporary administrative situation. Due to want of space, it is not practicable to go into the ARC proposals in extenso; only two major areas are covered, namely, 'structure and methods' and 'staffing', though a passing reference is also made to the more important recommendations of the ARC in other fields.<sup>3</sup>

#### PERSPECTIVE OF REFORMS

At its very outset, an attempt was made in ARC to evolve an overall approach to the problem of administrative reforms. Though the thinking in this regard did not crystallise into the adoption of written guidelines, the general discussion did lead to some sort of a broad perspective. The main ingredients of this perspective, as it eventually emerged in various ARC reports were as follows:

1. Basic considerations which should guide the making of recommendations by the Commission, e.g., the intensity or magnitude of administrative deficiency or inadequacy; the urgency for reform; the requirements of adapting the administrative system or procedure to the demands of developmental functions or tasks; the need for improving efficiency effecting economy and raising administrative standards; the need for improving the responsiveness of administration to the people and the viability of the proposed reforms in terms of administrative, social and political conditions.<sup>4</sup>
2. The three major constituents of administrative organisation—structure, methods and personnel—are closely inter-related and

<sup>3</sup>The discussion in the article centres largely around the ARC recommendations contained in its reports on: (1) *The Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedures of Work*; (2) *Personnel Administration*; (3) *State Administration*; and (4) *Delegation of Financial and Administrative Powers*. The corresponding reports of the ARC study teams and working groups have also been drawn upon.

<sup>4</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission. *The Administrative Reforms Commission and its Work—A Brief Survey*, Delhi, Manager of Publications (Government of India), 1970, p. 8.

need to be considered together from the point of view of improving efficiency and effectiveness of administration.<sup>5</sup> Further, the public administration system is also conditioned by the stage of social, economic and political development of the country and affected by the attitudes and motivations of those who run it.<sup>6</sup>

3. It is necessary "to take a realistic view of things and strike a balance between the needs of continuity and those of change". Radical changes in existing structures and methods should be suggested only where they are very much necessary. "Administrative practices and traditions which are no longer suited to new challenges of a fast developing country must be overhauled and even weeded out."<sup>7</sup> It also needs to be borne in mind that "transplantation of foreign practices is not necessarily the panacea for various administrative ills". Solutions to administrative problems have to be found in consonance with the national genius.<sup>8</sup>
4. In the matter of programmes of development, it is important for their efficient implementation that "the central ministries and departments of state governments should work out in fuller detail the administrative and operational implications of each programme and scheme and ensure their proper phasing. The existing arrangements within the government departments in regard to programme planning and management would have to be considerably improved".<sup>9</sup>
5. In the context of changed political and social conditions, a stage had been reached where it is necessary to rearrange the Centre-State relations in a manner that will enable the States to play a greater role in development and take over from the Centre, progressively, responsibilities in areas which undoubtedly belong to them. The role of the Centre in areas covered by the State should be largely that of a pioneer, guide, disseminator of information, overall planner and evaluator.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report of the Study Team on Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedures of Work*, Delhi, Manager of Publications (Government of India), 1968, Pt. II, Vol. I, p. 22, para 3.2.

<sup>6</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on the Machinery of Government of India and its Procedure of Work*, Delhi, Manager of Publications (Government of India), 1968, p. 2.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>9</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on the Machinery for Planning*, Delhi, Manager of Publications (Government of India), 1968, p. 3.

<sup>10</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on the Machinery of Government of India and its Procedures of Work*, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

## STRUCTURE AND METHODS

### *Contemporary Deficiencies*

The Commission identified the major organisational deficiencies as multiplicity of agencies, overlapping and diffusion of functions and proliferation of personnel. In Commission's view, the methods and procedures were ill-suited for proper policy formulation as well as for efficient programme execution, and the level of decision-making was being pushed upwards. Powers and responsibility did not match in several cases and there was over-centralisation of authority in administrative ministries and departments, and a desire on their part to protect their 'preserves' jealously. The arrangements for coordination were hardly adequate; there was a marked tendency toward too much cross references. Though the secretariat system had lent balance, consistency and continuity to administration, it was "encumbered with unessential work" and had become for a large part "an unwieldy and overstuffed organisation" leading to occasional blurring of responsibilities and choking of administrative machinery.<sup>11</sup>

The ARC has suggested organisational reforms largely in seven main directions as follows :

1. a more rational distribution of work in the secretariat and among the executive agencies,
2. improvement of arrangements for coordination,
3. reduction in administrative agencies and staff,
4. strengthening of the top structure and adoption of board-type of management, .
5. reduction in levels of consideration,
6. integration with the secretariat of the field agencies, and
7. delegation of powers.

### *Grouping of Subjects and Coordination*

As regards grouping of subjects at the secretariat levels, the ARC recommended for the Centre an overall scheme of reorganisation of ministries and departments into 16 ministers' portfolios and 38 departments (including ministries without any department) as against 19 ministers' portfolios and 40 departments existing in September, 1968.<sup>12</sup> This was based on considerations of rationality and efficient manageability of charges, tempered with the need for economy. The initial proposals in this regard were formulated by the ARC Study Team on the Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedures of Work, and built around the concept of 'nodal' agencies, i.e., administrative departments which

<sup>11</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report of the Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedures of Work*, op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>12</sup>There are today 40 departments and 20 ministries,

exercise a good amount of influence on the working of other agencies or of government as a whole, such as Home and Finance Ministries.<sup>13</sup> This Study Team observed, "The criterion of rationality is not applicable everywhere, but where it is, the grouping of subjects according to this principle can lead to the most effective type of coordination. Where this principle is not applicable, the only course to adopt is to have heterogeneous grouping subject to manageability of individual charges."<sup>14</sup> The ARC defined the principle of rationality in somewhat different terms. It explained, "The principle of rationality does not necessarily mean homogeneity of items of work. It implies affinity subjects and tasks in terms of the operational inputs to attain a particular programme goal or policy objectives."<sup>15</sup>

An additional principle kept in view, both by the Study Team and the ARC, was that of stability. The ARC noted, "In the past, ministries and departments have been split often to suit particular political exigencies. This has naturally affected adversely the efficient working of the government machinery and created fresh problems of coordination."<sup>16</sup> It was of the view that 'Stability in the basic administrative structure is very important for future administrative growth on balanced and healthy lines. At the same time, political exigencies requiring some increase in the number of ministers' portfolios cannot altogether be ruled out. Such increase should be brought about by a regrouping of departments and not by splitting them or realigning their subjects.'<sup>17</sup>

The ARC proposal for 16 Ministers' portfolios was, in some ways, an improvement upon the Study Team's scheme inasmuch as it contemplated that all subjects must be represented in the Union Cabinet through one of its members, and that the practice of having Ministers of State with independent charges was not satisfactory enough. Partly for this reason and partly for other considerations, ARC proposals visualized 16 super ministries', and the combination into a single ministry of : (a) ministries of Commerce and Industry, (b) Ministry of Transport and Shipping and Ministry of Tourism and Civil Aviation, (c) Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and Department of Communications. (d) Ministry of Health, Family Planning and Urban Development, Department of Social Welfare and Ministry of Education, and (e) Ministry of Petroleum & Chemicals and Ministry of Steel, Mines and Metals. It also proposed some transfers in subjects, such as the Department of Statistics to the Department of Economic Affairs from the Cabinet Secretariat; External Publicity to the Ministry

<sup>13</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report of the Study Team on Machinery of Government of India and its Procedures of Work*, op. cit., Pt. I, para 2.1.1.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., para 1.6.

<sup>15</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on the Machinery of Government of India and its Procedures of Work*, op. cit., p. 77.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 78,

of Information and Broadcasting from the Ministry of External Affairs; the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research to the Department of Industrial Development from the Ministry of Education; and the responsibilities in the matter of judicial administration of the Ministry of Home Affairs to the reorganised Ministry of Law and Justice.<sup>18</sup>

The ARC Study Team had recommended that the Prime Minister should be provided institutional support for effective performance of leadership tasks, and that the Departments of Administrative Reforms and Parliamentary Affairs should be in his direct charge. The ARC, however, favoured the Prime Minister holding the charge of the Departments of Personnel and Atomic Energy as well as of Planning. Taking note of the comparative practice in the UK, France, USA, etc., the ARC urged that the new Department of Personnel should be under the direct charge of the Prime Minister, and should not be located in the Ministry of Home Affairs as had been suggested by the Study Team. It further proposed that the Department of Administrative Reforms should be shifted from the Ministry of Home Affairs to the charge of the Deputy Prime Minister. The Ministry of Home Affairs under these recommendations would have become very much truncated.

The Department of Personnel was created in August 1970, and placed in the Cabinet Secretariat. The functions of the Ministry of Home Affairs in regard to the appointment of the judges of the high courts and supreme court were transferred, in March 1971, to the Department of Justice under the Minister of Law and Justice, though the Home Secretary continues to be in charge of the subject. The Department of Administrative Reforms has continued to remain in the Ministry of Home Affairs. With the re-formation of Smt. Gandhi's Government after the General Election of 1971, certain items, like the Central Bureau of Investigations (from the Ministry of Home Affairs) and the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence-cum-Enforcement (from the Ministry of Finance), have also been transferred to the Department of Personnel, located in the Cabinet Secretariat, which functions directly under the Prime Minister.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup>In September 1968, when the ARC gave its report on the subject, certain changes in the regrouping of subjects, on the lines recommended in March 1967 by its Study Team in its interim report, had already been carried out by the Government. For details, please see, Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on the Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedures of Work*, op. cit., p. 78.

<sup>19</sup>It would be of interest to note that the ARC Study Team on the Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedures of Work had proposed the creation of eight special cells in the Cabinet Secretariat, each dealing with a group of ministries with allied activities. This arrangement had been suggested with a view to improving the coordination of policy, ensuring timely and adequate implementation of Cabinet decisions and providing a continuing feeder line of information to the Cabinet and the Prime Minister about developments in different parts of the

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A crucial suggestion made by the ARC was that the cabinet secretary should be more than just a coordinator ; he should act as the principal staff adviser of the Prime Minister and the cabinet on all important policy matters. A couple of outside expert advisers have been appointed in the Prime Minister's Secretariat which has come to assume added significance.<sup>20</sup> The general trend has been towards the strengthening of the Prime Minister's control over and leadership role in administration.

As to improving coordination at the secretariat level, the ARC has recommended a five-fold approach, namely, (i) intra-ministry co-ordination through the policy advisory committee (mentioned below); (ii) building inter-departmental coordination into a rational system of grouping of subjects; (iii) fixing responsibility for inter-departmental coordination in a multi-department ministry on one of the departments which would act as nodal agency; (iv) representation of each subject in the Cabinet through a Cabinet Minister (*i.e.*, coordination through the creation of super-ministries); and (v) a reorientation of the system of Cabinet Committees with an under-pinning of secretaries' committee.<sup>21</sup>

#### *Reduction in Staff and Administrative Agencies*

The ARC proposals for reduction in the number of administrative agencies and personnel appears to have been very much dominated by considerations of efficiency and economy. It urged that the Planning Commission should reduce its personnel and expenditure, that the executive staff in the public sector undertakings should be substantially pruned, and that the planning and technical cells to be set in the central departments and ministries should be of small size. It favoured the rationalisation of executive departments in states and the retention only of those regional offices which subserved some definite administrative needs. It emphasised that the proliferation of personnel must be checked, and that the staff strength of all organisations should be reviewed by O & M or Work Study units.

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Government machinery. (Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report of the Study Team on Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedures of Work*, *op. cit.*, Pt. I, Para 4.22). The ARC, however, did not accept this recommendation on the ground that it would lead to the creation, within the Cabinet Secretariat, of a parallel organisation and that the arrangements proposed might even affect adversely the individual responsibility of ministers.

<sup>20</sup> Neither did the ARC nor any of its Study Teams ever recommend the induction of expert advisers into the office of the Prime Minister or of individual Ministers. A couple of members of the ARC were favourably disposed to the idea but it never fructified into a recommendation due to the opposition of the ARC bureaucracy.

<sup>21</sup> Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on the Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedures of Work*, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-96,

The ARC also proposed abolition of several offices, e.g., LIC zonal offices, additional members of the Railway Board, Controller of Capital Issues, etc. It has also suggested merger of the Department of Communications with the Posts and Telegraphs Board, and amalgamation of the Departments of Cooperation and Community Development.

Another set of recommendations of the ARC relates to the transfer of the executive work from the Secretariat to the field agencies. It was urged that the centrally sponsored schemes should be reduced to the minimum and that items of work which, properly speaking, should not be handled by the Centre should be transferred to the States. This, and the decentralisation of planning in those fields of development in which it can be more advantageously organised, supervised and implemented at the state and lower levels, has been proposed more for political reasons than for considerations of economy and efficiency.<sup>22</sup>

Notwithstanding its general approach of economy, the ARC did in some places recommend the creation of new offices and posts. It favoured strengthening of Finance and Accounts Branches of administrative ministries, creation of a full evaluation wing in the Planning Commission, appointment of area officers and district branch offices in the Life Insurance Corporation, constitution of an Industrial Development Service for manning the various positions in Directorate General of Technical Development, and appointment of deputy heads in executive departments in the states to look after day-to-day administrative work, and additional directors in state departments of industries dealing with both large and small industries sectors. The ARC has strongly opposed establishment of several new agencies proposed by its study teams or working groups, e.g., setting up of zonal life insurance corporations, separation of posts and telegraphs, constitution of a separate Ministry for Union Territories, etc.

#### *New Organisational Forms*

With a view to preventing fragmentation of industrial effort in public sector, the ARC recommended setting up of sector corporations in eight industrial and manufacturing areas as well as for air transport, shipping, hotels and tourism. The sector corporation may be considered an improved organisational form which would help promote and coordinate activities in the fields of industrial development, personnel recruitment and development, R & D, sales, wage policy, etc., in a segment of public enterprises of the same or allied character, on an integrated basis. Unfortunately, the government have not accepted this recommendation.

<sup>22</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on Machinery for Planning*, op. cit., p. 2; and Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on the Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedures of Work*, op. cit., para 83.

For developing organisational capability in the top structure, the ARC appears to hold a brief for the board type of management. In the area of regulatory-developmental administration, the ARC has favoured constitution of development boards (e.g., a Coal Development Board and a Textiles Development Board) consisting of technologists, economists and management experts. Other collegiate type of top management organisations suggested by the ARC include a Commission on Prices, Cost and Tariff, a Small Scale Industries Commission, State Planning Boards, a National Council and a Coordination Committee for Science and Technology, reconstitution of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research into 5 separate commissions on the pattern of Atomic Energy Commission on the basis of well-defined groups of allied disciplines, an Inter-State Council on Centre-State Relationships, and a Policy Advisory Committee in each ministry or major department. The latter would consist of the heads of all secretariat 'substantive work' wings (including the heads of non-secretariat organisations to be integrated with the secretariat) and would make possible enmeshing of several strands of expertise and a group approach to problem solving.

For public sector corporations, the ARC has recommended management boards of mixed type, comprising a number of full-time functional directors, 2 part-time government representatives and two or three part-time non-officials. The ARC is emphatic that the government representatives as well as the part-time non-official members should be selected on the basis of their professional qualifications and experience. Welcoming the introduction of the principle of collective decision at the top levels, the ARC has opposed the proposal of its working group for abolition of the Company Law Board.<sup>23</sup>

Surprisingly, nowhere in the ARC reports one finds any detailed statements of the superiority of collegiate type of top structure. While this pattern has some definite advantages in regard to the integration of diverse expertise and for problem solving, it does slow down the speed of decision-making and, as the past experience shows, leads, at times, to conflict of personalities. One only wishes that the ARC might have also suggested ways and means for more efficient functioning of the board type of top management.

#### *Levels of Consideration*

A central theme of the ARC scheme of reorganisation of structures and methods is the reduction in the number of the levels of consideration in order to prevent delays and promote quick decisions. Building

<sup>23</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on Economic Administration*, Delhi, Manager of Publications (Government of India), 1966, p. 80.

on the previous experiments with the pilot section and the attache system and the more recent experience with the officer-oriented pattern in the Works Division of the Ministry of Works and Housing, the ARC has recommended the adoption of desk-officer system. Under the proposed system, the work would flow direct to each officer who would be required and empowered to dispose of a substantial amount of it on his own, taking guidance from senior officers where necessary. An allied recommendation is that the number of levels of consideration and decision-making in the central and state secretariats should be reduced to two, namely, (i) under secretary/deputy secretary, and (ii) joint secretary/additional secretary, the existing functionaries known as assistants and section officers being utilised as staff aids. It deserves to be noted that the Study Team on the Machinery of Government of India and its Procedures of Work had suggested three levels of consideration and decision-making. Initially, the Commission agreed with the Study Team but later it decided upon two levels. However, in some of its other reports, the ARC has proposed three levels, e.g., in the Directorates of Industries in the States and the Planning Commission.<sup>24</sup>

The ARC has supported the recommendations of the Study Team for the reorganisation of secretariat wings to provide for homogeneous charges, unity of command and a distinct budget. The Study Team had also recommended a flexible flat type of organisation with three levels, each level having more than one pay scale, an increase in the span of control of the joint secretary from two to three divisions plus a cell for planning and policy, a registry and a unit of office management. But the ARC did not accept these recommendations. The Study Team had also proposed a total elimination of noting below the level of the 'chief' of the secretariat wing.<sup>25</sup> The ARC, however, recommended a cautious approach in the matter and proposed that noting should be confined to the more essential matters. It has, all the same supported the Study Team's proposal that policy matters should be processed by preparation of self-contained memoranda.

#### *Secretariat-Field Relations*

Another vital area of organisational reforms covered by the ARC is secretariat-field relations. Among the important causes of tension, in

<sup>24</sup>In this connection, the Administrative Reforms Commission has observed the following : "A complex hierarchical organisation and complicated procedures...are... particularly ill-suited for a developmental organisation like that dealing with small industries". [Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on Small Scale Sector*, Delhi, Manager of Publications (Government of India), 1969, p. 26].

<sup>25</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report of the Study Team on Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedures of Work*, op. cit., Pt. II, Vol. I, paras 4-14 to 4-30.

this field, mentioned by the ARC, are the frustrating control by the secretariat which is not well familiar with field conditions, the lack of understanding between the secretariat personnel (mostly generalists) and the field staff (largely specialists) and the involvement of the lower echelons in checking proposals put forward by the heads of the non-secretariat agencies. The Commission has noted that a recent trend has been to accord *ex-officio* status to heads of a number of non-secretariat organisations. A more recent development is the placing of heads of certain non-secretariat organisations in the concerned ministries, e.g., the Commissioner of Family Planning, Director Generals of Border Roads, Security Force, and Civil Defence.

A radical reform in the present pattern of secretariat-field relations has been mooted by the ARC Study Team on the machinery of Government of India and its Procedures of Work. It has proposed a total abolition of the present invidious distinction between the secretariat and the non-secretariat organisations and the integration of all important non-secretariat agencies with the secretariat, their heads serving as principal advisers to the government in their respective areas on all operational matters including operational policy. The Study Team has proposed a comprehensive scheme of administrative offices in place of the present secretariat-centred system. It has suggested that the present secretariat titles should be abandoned and a secretariat wing should in future be headed by a 'chief', and a division by a 'director'. All personnel below the 'director' would bear the designation 'executive'. These new titles will equally apply to the heads and deputy heads of the field agencies which are integrated with the secretariat.<sup>26</sup> The amalgamation of the field organisations, with the secretariat, as proposed, would render surplus their counterpart policy branches in the secretariat. It would also induct specialists and experts (who normally head the field agencies) into the secretariat at the policy-making levels.

It is unfortunate that the ARC has not accepted fully the above-mentioned fundamental reforms proposed by the Study Team. The ARC has taken the view that the non-secretariat organisations which have functions and responsibilities of a regulatory character, or which are mainly concerned with provision of services or production or supply of goods, should not be integrated with the secretariat. It favours continuing of the *status quo* in this regard for two main reasons : (i) insulation of the regulatory process from interferences by the government, and (ii) assuring the necessary operational autonomy for effective enforcement of a regulatory policy. However, the Commission agrees

<sup>26</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report of the Study Team on Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedures of Work*, op. cit., paras 3.18, 3.28, 4.18, 4.21 and 4.24(8).

that field agencies engaged primarily in planning, implementation, coordination and review of a single development programme or several allied programmes, covering a substantial area of the activities of the ministry and having a direct bearing on policy-making, should be integrated with the secretariat. The ARC has evolved some detailed criteria in this regard.<sup>27</sup>

The ARC does not favour the conferring of formal *ex-officio* secretariat status on the heads of the executive departments which are merged with the secretariat and would like them to retain their present titles, but enjoy status adequate to their responsibilities. It is difficult to understand how these heads are going to pull their weight just by being functionally placed in the secretariat when their secretariat colleagues would continue to enjoy the power and glamour of secretariat status. The attitude of overlordism exhibited by the secretariat bosses is currently at the root of many of the generalist-specialist tensions. The remedy proposed by the Study Team would have helped create a new psychological climate. But the ARC has stuck to the traditional policy-execution dichotomy and its partial acceptance of the Study Team's proposal robs it of much of its intrinsic values.

#### *Delegation of Powers*

In the field of delegation of financial powers, the ARC has taken the stand that the approach should be to delegate to the 'maximum possible' rather than the 'minimum necessary', and that delegations should be reviewed periodically and the changes needed should be made through amendments to the rules and not through executive instructions.<sup>28</sup> This general recommendation has been supported by specific proposals of larger delegations to Branch Offices of the LIC, zonal and divisional

<sup>27</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on the Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedures of Work*, op. cit., paras 91-104. The ARC has made an exception in the case of the Central Boards of Direct Taxes and Indirect Taxes on the ground that these organisations, though regulatory, have historically a distinctive character of their own and the combination of policy-making and executive functions has in their case worked very well in the past. At the State level, the executive departments which have been listed for a merger, with the State Secretariat, are: agriculture, animal husbandry, forests, fisheries, cooperation, community development, public works, irrigation and power, medical and public health, education, social welfare, transport, commerce, industry and technical education. However, the executive agencies dealing with subjects like police, excise, stamp duty and other taxes, labour inspection, factories inspection, vigilance, jails, treasuries, etc., being of a regulatory character, are not to be amalgamated with the State secretariat. [Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on State Administration*, Delhi, Manager of Publications (Government of India), 1969, Chapter IV, paras 12-17].

<sup>28</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on Delegation of Financial and Administrative Powers*, Delhi, Manager of Publications (Government of India,) 1969, pp. 2-30.

Railway administrations and state departments of industries. It has also been urged that the Railways should be permitted to procure stores special to them through their own organisations. The ARC have also suggested that the higher authorities should exercise restraint in calling for information on issues which are the subject matter of delegated power and should train their juniors to develop the habit of taking decisions on their own.<sup>29</sup>

However, the ARC has opposed the recommendations of the Study Team on the Machinery of Government of India and its Procedures of Work for delegation of selected responsibilities to administrative Ministries in regard to the scrutiny and acceptance of budget proposals.

The Study Team had also proposed that the patterns of delegations should be increased to suit the nature of work in different typical organisations, both 'line' and 'specialist'.<sup>30</sup> But the ARC considered that the existing two-fold pattern of delegation to heads of departments and heads of offices was adequate enough. It felt that an increase in the number of patterns should be achieved mainly by suitable adjustments in the prevailing system. The ARC insisted that redelegation of powers by heads of organisations should only be with the approval of the ministries and that it should be subject to periodical review.<sup>31</sup> As against this, the Study Team had urged that powers to be redelegated should be classified into two categories, namely, those which could be delegated at the discretion of the head of the organisation and those which would require prior approval of higher authorities for redelegation. Thus, the ARC has hedged its recommendation for 'maximum possible' delegation by procedural safeguards, revealing an attitude of caution and restraint.

The Study Team had as well suggested a pattern of delegation of personnel powers. It considered that the administrative ministries should normally deal with policy issues and major items of work in relation to senior management, and all other items should be delegated. It had, similarly, proposed that the headquarters of an executive agency should concern itself with minor tasks regarding senior management and all major tasks concerning middle management; and that the supervisory and executive officers should handle minor tasks in relation to middle management and should have full powers regarding all other

<sup>29</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on Delegation of Financial and Administrative Powers*, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>30</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report of the Study Team on Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedures of Work*, Part II, Vol I., *op. cit.*, para 7.20.

<sup>31</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on Delegation of Financial and Administrative Powers*, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-14.

staff.<sup>32</sup> The ARC has only noted this recommendation, and made no comments.

#### PERSONNEL IN THE MACHINERY

It is in the field of personnel administration that the ARC has taken a bolder and non-traditional stand, though not comprehensive enough from the view-point of the needs of development. Taking note of the new developmental responsibilities of the government and the changing character of regulatory administration due to the thrust of economic and social forces, the ARC feels that the advance of science and technology has projected new tasks of administration, and combined with the increase in the scale of governmental operations, this lends a new dimension to problems of personnel administration. According to the ARC, the main deficiencies in this field are: preference for the generalist in policy and management positions, disparities between the needs of various jobs and the qualifications and experience of men who man them, emphasis on seniority in selection for higher positions and inadequate opportunities of promotion for the meritorious among the lower ranks.<sup>33</sup>

Here, it would be of interest to note the findings, in regard to senior management in government, of the ARC Study Team on the Machinery of Government of India and its Procedures of Work. This Study Team has noted that most senior personnel are men of "high ability and dedication with a rich fund of experience and judgment". They have contributed "materially to whatever has been achieved in modern India". Top administrators have today quite an excessive amount of work to turn out, leaving them very little time to think, plan, reflect upon, and review the work they direct. "Too few are responsible for too much".<sup>34</sup>

The Study Team added that the concept of senior management had not as yet received adequate enough attention within the government. Nor was the 'management' of senior management unified at one place. The safeguard principles of 'seniority' and 'reservation of posts' tended to obstruct the entry into the senior management of talent from all available sources, and "...there has been an almost unseemly struggle for higher shares in senior management posts for the various cadres, creating an impression that the guiding consideration in the minds of all concerned is the good of this or that cadre rather than that of senior management itself".

<sup>32</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on Delegation of Financial and Administrative Powers*, op. cit., p. 120.

<sup>33</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on Personnel Administration*, Delhi, Manager of Publications (Government of India), 1969, pp. 5-6.

<sup>34</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report of the Study Team on Machinery of Government of India and its Procedures of Work*, op. cit., Part II, Vol. 1, paras 6.6., 6.12.

As it is, the standards of selection for senior management have not been uniformly high in recent years. There is too much mobility at the senior levels, too short tenures, and "because of generalism, the mistaken idea persists that every senior administrator is good enough to handle almost any senior management assignment".

#### *Unified Pay Structure*

An important reform suggested by the ARC is the creation of a unified pay structure (of 20-25 grades) on the basis of job evaluation. It is contended that such a structure would help remove the existing disincentives to improved performance and also facilitate personnel mobility. While the advantages of ensuring equal pay for equal work are apparent, the proposal for unified grading structure has much wider implications. If accepted and implemented, the concept of an assured career service with only few selection barriers will give way to a structure of number of distinct—and short—grades each one of which will be attained on the basis of performance in the lower one.<sup>35</sup> It is understood that this recommendation has been remitted by the government to the Pay Commission for processing.

#### *Staffing for Policy Advice*

As regards staffing of the middle and senior levels at the headquarters of the Central Government, the ARC has taken the view that the growing variety of administrative tasks requires not only knowledge and experience of management concepts and techniques but also of the programme content. The new demands of administration cannot be met unless the specialists and the technical experts are integrated into the administrative hierarchy and there is equality of opportunity for members of all services, both technical and non-technical, to rise to the higher positions in the government on the basis of merit and performance.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on Personnel Administration*, op. cit., Chapter IV.

<sup>36</sup>The ARC recommendations concerning 'open door' for all service cadres to the top was significantly influenced by the thinking of its Chairman, Shri K. Hanumanthaia. Inaugurating a Joint Seminar of the Regional Branches of the IIPA in Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Madras, Maharashtra and Mysore at Hyderabad, on November 20, 1967, he observed: "The new developmental responsibilities call for administrative leadership which is drawn from a broader base, which is enriched by the experience from various specialised areas of administrative activity. There is need today to throw open opportunities at the highest level in administration to all sections of society, like the scientists, economists, teachers and men with specialised experience in business and industry. It is wrong to reserve all the first places in Government for career officers. Monopoly in any form is bad. It creates an irresistible desire for power and nurses class consciousness and inefficiency."

The ARC has suggested a detailed scheme to promote specialisation and also provide opportunities to members of all services to climb to the top. It has recommended that senior and middle management positions at the central headquarters in areas for which functional services already exist or can be formed should be manned by members of those services. For middle management positions in other areas, the ARC has proposed a scheme of specialisation covering 8 broad fields and stipulated that entry to them should be open to all Class I officers with 8 to 12 years of service, on the basis of a special test. The 8 areas of specialisation proposed are: (i) economic administration, (ii) industrial administration, (iii) agricultural and rural development administration, (iv) social and educational administration, (v) personnel administration, (vi) financial administration, (vii) defence administration and internal security, and (viii) planning.<sup>37</sup> The ARC proposal also envisages the deputation, to the Centre, of class II officers from state services for the post of under secretary in functional areas like agriculture and education and for secretariat work.

The posts of joint secretaries and upwards, outside 'functional areas', should, the ARC suggested, be filled on the basis of general managerial competence, preferably from among those with experience in one of the 8 middle management specialities, and it should be possible to move from one broad area to another. The ARC has also recommended that the IAS should in future serve a uni-functional purpose and attend to revenue and land administration, law and order, civil supplies and other regulatory work.

A similar scheme of staffing of senior level in state secretariats has been recommended by the ARC. It has been urged that for posts of secretaries, technical and functional officers of the state services should not be precluded. Further, the heads of executive departments should normally be drawn from the corresponding state functional services and that the personnel of the state services should also be considered for ex-cadre posts which are presently reserved for IAS officers.

There has been much discussion on the ARC's identification of functional areas of administration and areas outside the functional category. Some have even described the latter as 'non-functional'. The ARC is itself responsible for this confusion over a scheme which it was at great pains to evolve but did not spell out in clear terms. What

<sup>37</sup>The ARC have defined a functional 'area' to include not only one or more technical functions for which pre-entry vocational education is required (e.g., engineering, but also those which call for specialisation in a particular branch of administration (such as, accounts and income-tax) though they do not require pre-entry vocational education (Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on Personnel Administration*, *op. cit.*, Chapter III, para 17).

the ARC, perhaps, meant was that there should be 8 areas of specialisation at the middle management level of deputy secretary and equivalent. Many of these posts could be staffed by 'functional services' which already exist. These are the 'functional' posts. There will be posts for which no single functional service can have monopoly rights and for which all should be able to compete. If the ARC's scheme is read backwards, this is what it comes to.

It was a coincidence that the civil services, of India and of the UK were being examined at about the same time. It was unfortunate, as far as the ARC was concerned, that the Fulton report of UK preceded its own on personnel administration by some months. In the event, both reports echoed much the same philosophy; therefore, it would be plausible to infer that the ARC was influenced by the Fulton document. However, a closer examination would not support such a proposition. Even before the Fulton report came out, the Study Teams of the ARC, on which the final report of the ARC on personnel administration was based, had already come out with recommendations emphasising specialisation, pay reforms, enlightened secretariat, etc. Also the ARC spelt out its scheme of administrative specialisation in concrete detail, while Fulton did not. There is reason to believe that the need for concrete ideas in this matter has since been recognised in the UK Sir William Armstrong, Permanent Secretary, Civil Service Department, UK, has in a speech, delivered last year, envisaged the deployment of administrators and specialists in 8 broad groups of ministries.

It would be interesting to note that the ARC Study Team on the Machinery of Government of India and its Procedures of Work has recommended a somewhat different solution. Emphasising that the present "heavy reliance on the generalist source deprives senior management of the depth which might come from a large admixture of persons possessing basic specialisations",<sup>38</sup> it has proposed that "there should be systematic talent hunting for entry into senior management, within the traditional source of the IAS, in the various central services and, most important, amongst the technical and scientific employees of the government". However, in view of 'right kind of experience' needed for senior management which the IAS officer has, it must remain its 'principle feeder source'. An important measure proposed by the Study Team for developing efficient and competent middle management is specialisation in : (i) headquarters work, (ii) 'substantive' work, and (iii) 'staff' work of different types. As regards the last, the areas recommended are : personnel administration, financial management, planning, O & M, economic analysis, statistics and public relations. For specialisation in

<sup>38</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report of the Study Team on Machinery of Government of India and its Procedures of Work*, op. cit., Pt. II, Vol. I, para 6 11 (1).

'substantive work', the Study Team has proposed the building up of corps of trained generalist-specialists in three broad sectors: industries, social services, and agriculture. The Study Team adds that it is important to develop a corps of specialists in personnel administration, financial management, planning and O & M, "drawn mostly but necessarily not entirely from generalists".<sup>39</sup>

Another approach which has been mooted is the development of specialised knowledge and experience within the IAS. This is more or less implicit in the executive assignment system which is being evolved in the Office of Career Management in the Union Department of Personnel. The recent addition of 'Economics in Governments' and 'Management in Government' to the training syllabus for the IAS probationers and refresher courses will help in this direction. And, if the quota for departmental promotion to the IAS is also increased suitably and the specialist and technical personnel with managerial experience are freely considered, it would open up another way of meeting the problem. This will not, all the same, provide an adequate answer to the rising aspirations of the specialists unless something is done to remove disadvantages they suffer from in the matter of pay and prestige.<sup>40</sup>

India has got today a well-established system of civil service, with the multi-purpose generalist cadre of IAS permeating key levels of administration in the States and at the Centre. In this respect, India is fortunately better placed than many other developing countries. There is no denying the need for induction of specialists and technical personnel in larger number in middle and senior management positions and for their integration with the administrative hierarchy. It is, anyhow, worth considering whether a radical break with what exists will bring about the needed change in the capability and outlook of the administration. Or, will it be preferable to improve upon the existing system and

<sup>39</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report of the Study Team on Machinery of Government of India and its Procedures of Work*, op. cit., para 6.36 (5).

<sup>40</sup>Incidentally, for the staffing of the public sector undertakings, the ARC has not favoured an 'open-door' policy of recruitment of managerial talent from all sources. Taking the view that the large proportion of deputationists (ranging between 33 to 38 per cent in non-technical posts) was inimical to the development of personnel from within and to the success of the enterprise, the ARC strongly urged that the public sector undertakings should shed off the deputationists, giving them, however, the option to get absorbed permanently. The recommendations having been accepted by the Government, most of the deputationists are reported to have expressed a desire to go back. This would obviously create an immediate problem of their placement in the parent departments as well as that of finding substitute talent for public enterprises. For preserving the operational autonomy of 'sector corporations' and facilitating personnel development from within, the ARC also does not support the Industrial Management Pool or any other such scheme.

remove the causes which constrain its efficient functioning? \* The problem is much more complex and difficult than what appears on the face of it. The answer needs to be found in the context of the total situation—administrative, social and political.

#### *Need for a Wider Perspective*

The difficulty with the ARC approach to staffing of policy and management positions is that it goes only one step forward and not far enough to meet the requirements of development administration, as differentiated from regulatory administration. In a developing country, like India, functional specialisation, though of crucial importance, is only one of the factors which can make development administration tick. Effective formulation and management of development policies and programme demands much more. With increased differentiation of roles within the administrative system, the need for integrative coordination equally goes up. Again, development administration, with its added emphasis on the achievement of *positive results*, promotion of institutional change and a heightened sensitivity to the environment, calls for a new class of administrators who possess just not specialised knowledge or managerial skills but also 'development-oriented' values, attitudes and motivation as well as a high commitment to service to the people.

If the past experience is any guide, regulatory administrations have shown initiative, resourcefulness and a concern for getting results mostly in times of emergency only. In normal times, however, the values and attitudes developed in regulatory administration<sup>41</sup> come in the way of their being 'development minded' and being adequately responsive to the people and the rapidly changing but not totally unstable environment which characterises the development programmes. From this perspective, both the generalists of yesterday and the specialists of today do not appear to be equipped adequately for policy advice positions. We, perhaps, need in these places a 'composite' type of administrator who is both a generalist and specialist, who has an integrative faculty of a high order as well as a good grasp of the basic concepts and facts of the area in which he functions, who is sold to innovation, and above all, who is *positive*, development-oriented values and attitudes.

#### *Training in Management*

Connected with the scheme of staffing of positions of policy advice is a set of detailed proposals for training in management for all the three

<sup>41</sup>According to the ARC, regulatory functions involve the regulation of activities of the individual in wide sense and include collection of taxes by Government agencies. (*Administrative Reforms Commission, Report on the Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedures of Work, op. cit.*, para 92.)

levels in the central secretariat—junior, middle and senior. Training for the middle-level management is proposed in 3 areas: headquarters work, broad area specialisation and sub-area specialisation. A programme of further education has been proposed at the senior management level, oriented towards policy-making, programme planning and review and problem-solving. It is to be divided into two parts—(A) a general study and orientation supplemented by group discussions, seminars and syndicates; and (B) specific studies of a set policy problems or a detailed study of the entire policy-making process in a segment of area of administrative activity. The ARC adds that, for Part A of the programme, the services and the expertise of the Indian Institute of Public Administration may be utilised.<sup>42</sup> Part B is to be arranged in other professional institutions, like Institutes of Management at Ahmedabad and Calcutta, Administrative Staff College at Hyderabad, Institute of Economic Growth or any other agency which specialises in the area which would be of interest to the senior civil servant.<sup>43</sup> The ARC did not relish the idea that training for senior management should be handled by a government training institution. It explained, "the development of different abilities and skills needed at the senior level requires an atmosphere which does not inhibit critical thinking and is conducive to problem-solving. The need is for an environment where sectional views and attitudes and the accustomed patterns of thought are challenged, and free association of ideas and exercise of imagination is encouraged. We feel that such an open climate for self-development and opportunities for inter-action can be better found in a professional organisation."<sup>44</sup>

Some other key recommendations of the ARC concern the formulation of a clear-cut and far-sighted national policy on civil service training, emphasis in training on building proper values and attitudes, organisation of foundational courses for members of class I State Services and class I Technical Central Services, expansion of refresher courses, creation of civil service training institutions in States where they do not exist, improved training facilities for class III and IV personnel and research on training needs, methods and techniques. An important gap in the ARC scheme of training is the absence of any proposal for

<sup>42</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on Personnel Administration*, op. cit., p. 75.

<sup>43</sup>The ARC Study Team on Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedures of work has recommended that no one (generalist, technologist or scientist) should in future be considered eligible without first completing successfully a training course for senior management. The existing senior managers of less than 3 years' standing should also undergo a similar course. (The Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report of the Study Team on Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedures of Work*, op. cit., Part I, Vol. I, para 6.19 (F-ii).

<sup>44</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on Personnel Administration*, op. cit., p. 75.

mangement training of technical and specialist personnel working in executive agencies. Its love for managerial training for specialists did not extend beyond the secretariat policy and mangement positions.

#### *Motivation for Superior Performance*

The 'open door' to the top for all service cadres, recommended by the ARC, is closely inter-linked with its basic philosophy of promotion from within. Here, the overall approach of the ARC was as follows: "The system of appointment should be in accordance with the basic principle that a person from the lowest ranks can rise to the top if he has acquired the necessary qualifications and if his performance has been outstanding."<sup>45</sup> For providing an incentive for talented young-men in junior positions to get on the fast moving track to climb up, the ARC has urged for an increase in the promotion quota to 40 per cent. wherever it is lower, and filling up of half of the vacancies available for departmental promotion to class I positions by a special competitive test. For scientists, the recommendation is that it should be possible for them to earn a promotion without a change in the nature of the job. For providing an objective base for promotion and helping employee's development, the ARC has recommended an improved system of annual confidential reports. The annual performance appraisal, the ARC suggests, should be done on the basis of a brief resume to be prepared by each employee of the work done by him during the year. The Commission feels that it should not be necessary under the revised procedure, to communicate adverse entries to the officer reported upon.

But the ARC has forgotten to recommend any scheme of further education for the class IV and class III employees which would enable them to move up. When this matter was taken up, it was thought that the cost involved would be too high. As regards psychological incentives, the ARC recommendations are largely confined to cash awards and advance increments for contributing valuable suggestions, grant of medals and commendatory certificates for exemplary or special achievement, and special awards for superior group performance. For motivating personnel to superior performance, the ARC seems to have adopted an approach of combining both the carrot and the stick. Feeling very much concerned over growing indiscipline and strikes by government employees, it has proposed the extension to State Government employees of the prohibition imposed by the Centre on strikes in essential services, making disruptive demonstrations in offices a public offence, empowering all supervisory officers to suspend a subordinate for gross

<sup>45</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on Life Insurance Administration*, Delhi, Manager of Publications (Government of India), 1968, p. 12.

dereliction of duty and the constitution of civil service tribunals at the Centre and in the States to hear employees' appeals against orders inflicting major punishments of dismissal, removal from service and lowering of rank.

Material and non-material incentives apart, the basic philosophy which underlies the ARC's approach to improving the efficiency of the individual civil servant is the cultivation by him of a sense of duty and other virtues as well as a better appreciation of his obligations to the nation. "The sort of mentality which avidly seeks to contrast the financial prospects of the Civil Service with more lucrative opportunities of commercial employment is not the one on which we can depend for the realization of the social and economic goals of the nation. The urge to work for a cause higher than oneself, and the consciousness of serving noble ends, can generate energies which can transcend and vanquish material handicaps. The young men and women who are selected for the Services should be made to feel that the opportunity to participate in the nation building enterprise is in itself a valued privilege and a means of self-fulfilment."<sup>46</sup>

Following the above mentioned philosophy, several recommendations have been made which incidentally add a light touch to otherwise dull and drab reports, e.g., starting each training day with a prayer, abstinence from intoxicating drinks by probationers, banning the employment in public service of the spouse of a civil servant, and a jaunt in a village for two weeks to get acquainted with rural life and conditions.<sup>47</sup>

#### *Central Personnel Agency*

A nodal reform proposed by the ARC, which has already been implemented by the Government of India, was the establishment of a central personnel agency both at the Centre and in States, i.e., a separate Department of Personnel charged with the responsibility for formulation of overall personnel policies and overseeing their implementation, planning, career development, talent-hunting, and development and selection of personnel for senior levels. The ARC proposal contemplated that the new Department of Personnel should not administer itself any service cadre so that it could devote itself to policy making without holding a brief for any service interest. However, the new department as of today is the controlling authority for the IAS. The ARC Study Team on the Machinery of Government of India and its

<sup>46</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on Personnel Administration, op. cit.*, p. 66.

<sup>47</sup>For an interesting commentary on the philosophy of the Administrative Reforms Commission, please see V.V. Moharir, "Administrative Reforms in India", *Development and Change*, Vol. II (1970-71), No. 2, pp. 93-94.

Procedures of Work had proposed that the application of service rules to individual cases at present being dealt with by the Establishment Division, Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance, should be taken over by the new Department of Personnel so as to facilitate unification of personnel functions in the central agency. The ARC, however, did not agree with this proposal and suggested that the powers of Finance Ministry in such matters should in future be exercised only in consultation with the central personnel agency. This is one of the good instances of the sacrifice of the principle of rationality for maintaining the *status quo*.

The ARC has also recommended that the staffing pattern and methods of work of the new Department of Personnel should be 'research-oriented' so that it is able to devote concerted attention to formulation of new policies, set new standards and raise the quality of administration. Under its charter, the Department has to serve as the focal point for research on personnel matters and it has already initiated some studies on problems like performance appraisal, strike, recruitment, procedures and talent hunting. As suggested by the ARC, it proposes to set up an advisory council on personnel administration. The staffing pattern, however, continues to remain mostly traditional. If the Department is to fulfil its role of modernisation of the public personnel system, it will have to strengthen its research activities substantially and farm out a series of studies of various professional institutions. It is only on the basis of research that the Department will be able to suggest new ideas and innovations. The Working Group on the Department of Personnel (set up by the ARC Study Team on Machinery of Government of India and its Procedures of Work) visualised that the head of the department should be a person with ideas and a flair for realistic innovation, and the joint secretaries in charge of its different wings should not only be intellectually gifted but also possess capacity for innovation and passion to get their ideas implemented.

#### OTHER IMPORTANT RECOMMENDATIONS

There are several areas which have been reported upon by the ARC but paucity of space does not allow their coverage. In the field of financial management, a far-reaching recommendation of the ARC was that performance budgeting should be introduced in all departments and organisations dealing with development programmes. This proposal has been accepted by government and is being implemented. The Indian Institute of Public Administration is assisting the government in the changeover to the new system. Another significant proposal, which has been implemented, related to the setting up of 4 or 5

special audit boards for public sector enterprises consisting of senior officers of the organisation of the Comptroller and Auditor General as well as outside experts in commerce and financial matters. The ARC also urged the need for a change in the attitude of audit authorities and observed : "Audit, instead of being content with playing a negative and neutral role, should aim at a positive and constructive approach directed towards seeking improvements in organisational efficiency and in the effectiveness of the financial rules and procedures."<sup>48</sup>

The ARC has been very critical of the tortuous and dilatory procedures which cause inconvenience and harassment to the public as well as of the inadequacies of the existing arrangement for the redress of public grievances. The remedies proposed include the establishment of Ombudsman type of institutions of Lokpal and Lokayukta, streamlining of procedures, fixing of time-limits for disposal of citizens' applications and strengthening of the departmental redress machinery. In some of its reports, the ARC has urged the reinforcement of the system of advisory committees, railway users' consultative committees and consumers' councils. The ARC recommendations bearing directly on improving responsiveness of the administration to the citizens' needs and difficulties are only a few. On the whole, its proposals aim at bringing relief to the citizens through the improvement of administrative efficiency in the long run. In the matter of panchayati raj administration, the ARC has favoured the vesting of all developmental responsibilities at the district level with the zila parishad and the continuance of three tiers, and it insists that the appointment of the district development officer, who will be the chief executive officer of the zila parishad, should be open to all services.

The ARC was particularly anxious to improve the public accountability of administration. Following the U.K. practice, it suggested the establishment, over time, of new standing committees for five broad sectors of administration, namely, social services, economic administration, defence and foreign affairs, food and agriculture, and transport. The ARC also proposed that the Public Accounts Committee should take upon itself the task of reviewing the performance in relation to budgeted programmes. A special Parliamentary Committee was suggested to examine the annual progress reports and evaluation reports on Plan performance, and an all-party Parliamentary Committee of both Houses to oversee the expeditious implementation of recommendations made by the ARC itself. While urging the tightening of parliamentary control, the ARC pointed out, "There appears to be among Members of Parliament a general distrust of civil servants and a feeling

<sup>48</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on Finance, Accounts and Audit*, Delhi, Manager of Publications (Government of India), 1968, para 94.

that the government machinery is invariably inefficient. Such an attitude tends to demoralise civil servants." The ARC pleads that a balanced view should be taken of the functioning of a government agency and odd instances of *bona fide* mistakes or shortcomings should be viewed against the background of overall achievements.<sup>49</sup>

### CONCLUSION

The foregoing review of the thinking and proposals of the ARC highlights that its overall approach was, by and large, one of balancing the need for administrative change with the requirements of administrative stability. The fundamental administrative reforms recommended by the ARC are only a few, e.g., performance budgeting, Lokpal and Lokayukta, unified grading pay structure, induction of specialists into middle and senior policy and management positions, sector corporations, special audit boards for public sector enterprises, a full-fledged department of personnel at the central personnel agency, etc. In most cases, the ARC tried to wrestle with the current administrative problems by proposing improvements and adjustments rather than any basic changes. The ARC, however, did attempt to probe deeply into some important problems and, its 20 reports and the reports of its 33 study teams and working groups deal with a wide variety of administrative issues. Referring to the role of the ARC in highlighting the generally neglected issues of public administration, a versatile civil servant, with rich and wide experience in administrative reforms, has pointed out, "A comprehensive commission can be likened to a major irrigation project, such as a big river dam. This catches the public imagination because of its spectacular dimensions. But it takes long to build, its costs keep mounting, there are inevitable muddles during the construction stage and the utilisation of benefits, once the job is done, develops slowly. All these may make people weary of the whole project and they begin wondering whether a series of minor projects would not have been more profitable. Minor projects do certainly have their own advantages, particularly as they yield quick results. But only a dam can harness the full potential of a river.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on the Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedures of Work*, op. cit., para 70. The Government of India has not accepted the proposal for 5 sectoral standing committees of Parliament on the ground that these would not be in consonance with the basic scheme of the Constitution. Nor has the government conceded the demand for an all-party Parliamentary Committee.

<sup>50</sup>N. K. Mukharji, "Methods of Administrative Reforms—The Indian Experience", a paper read at the Round Table on Administrative Reforms and Development organised by the National Institute of Administration and Development, Beirut, April, 1970, para 25 (2).

As regards the limitations of the ARC effort, it must be conceded that the manner in which the ARC conducted its deliberations did not lend itself to viewing the problems of different sectors and segments of administration from an integrated perspective, both vertically and horizontally. The fact that several of its study teams and working groups dealt with problems of programme administration did help somewhat towards formulating proposals in the light of the inter-relationship between structures, methods and personnel within each programme area. Barring some exceptions, the reports, however, do not indicate that this aspect was gone into a detail.

Another important lacuna in the ARC effort was the virtual absence of any strategy of selecting key or nodal points of administrative reforms. One of the study teams did make such an attempt but not the ARC. The ARC appears to have spread itself too thinly and many of the reports abound in minor procedural issues and at times, even non-administrative matters. Again, the ARC approached the problem mostly from the point of view of structural and procedural reorganisation and did not pay much attention to behavioural components. There was too much concentration on the immediate problems and the future needs and challenges do not seem to have received their full due. Though the ARC has, in several places, conceded the need for varying the organisational structure and personnel policies and practices to meet the particular needs of a programme, it has not, for the most part, spelt out any framework for a systematic 'differential' or 'contingent' approach to administrative reforms. The ARC rejected the proposal for a flat and flexible wing organisation put forward by its Study Team on the Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedures of Work but it did not make any substitute proposals. Due to its over-anxiety for economy and pruning of administrative proliferation, it fought shy of taking a wider view of bigger government, of a more elaborate but dynamic and resilient administrative machinery.

Lastly, the ARC failed to evolve any clear conceptual and comprehensive framework for dealing with problems of development administration. It is only in a few of its recommendations that it has attempted to differentiate between development administration and regulatory administration, e.g., integration of the non-secretariat organisation with the secretariat, performance budgeting, a ban on periodic transfers of field staff engaged in development programmes and the setting up of developmental boards with both regulatory and developmental functions. The recommendations concerning the constitution of the policy advisory committee and development of various specialisations at the headquarters of the government are designed to help to improve the policy-making process, but inadequate attention has been devoted to improving the administrative capability of field agencies and to the

installation of appropriate information system and use of modern management tools. The scheme of staffing of policy positions suggested by the ARC is deficient inasmuch as it is built only around the need for specialisation rather than the wider requirements of development programmes as differentiated from regulatory administrative activities. If the latter perspective had been followed, the conclusions too would have been different.

It is all too easy to criticise, denigrate and reject the best of a committee's labours. So it is with the ARC. Perhaps, it bit more than what it could chew; it was vague where it might have been definite; it was forthright where it should have been circumspect; and it could have been progressive where it took more or less a traditional approach. The ARC sat at a time of social and political flux, when the need for radical change was keenly felt, not in one sector but all over, and when change was eagerly expected. The ARC tried to meet the challenge to its best. Opinions may differ on particular recommendations but it must be said to the credit of ARC and its study teams and working groups that, by and large, they succeeded in producing an extensive scheme of administrative reforms and a rich crop of new ideas and perspectives. "The information collected by the study teams and the discussion of issues in the reports of the study teams and the commission are likely to influence decision-making in matters of public administration for many years to come. This is likely to happen even though particular remedies suggested by the commission may come to be rejected.<sup>51</sup>



<sup>51</sup>N. K. Mukharji, *op. cit.*, para 25(1).

# **Administrative Reforms in The States A Kaleidoscopic Panorama\***

**Bata K. Dey**

**A**DMINISTRATIVE REFORMS—an artificial inducement of administrative transformation against resistance—has existed ever since men conceived better ways of organising their social activities.<sup>1</sup> Viewed in this sense, it is as old as administration itself; for, no organisation, however well-gearred towards the fulfilment of its set objectives, can remain stable in its maintenance. It will, after a time, develop discontinuities, norm-displacement, and other goal-alignmental problems caused by a wide variety of uncontrollable variables—technological explosion, environmental imperatives, demand fluctuations in consumers, objectives-reframing an urge for improvement or finding an alternative to *status quo*, i.e., a 'better tomorrow'! The last is an important motivation, though it operates alone and in combination with other factors, for a change along desirable direction; no reform exercise, indeed, is an 'act of God' or a gift from Santa Claus but a deliberate social action, pre-meditated and planned by administrative reformers.

Administrative development (and through it reforms) in this country has traditionally been linked with political development and has naturally had an unprecedented velocity after independence, more particularly after the adoption of integrated planning as a tool for a total transformation of a halting, near-crippled economy into a vibrant self-reliant one, decadent institutions into modern ones, a tradition-bound society into a social order based on egalitarianism and distributive justice.

\*From *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XXII, No. 3, 1976, pp. 563-582.

<sup>1</sup>Gerald E. Caiden, *Administrative Reforms*, Aldine Publishing Company, Chicago, 1969, Chap. 1.

## COMPULSIONS OF CHANGE

Both the Central and State administrations had to subject themselves to the compulsions of change in response to the new challenges of development. In one area, namely, reforms, the Centre and States have learnt from each other and benefited from a sharing of experiences and adaptive practices. It is, indeed, interesting to note that the term 'administrative reforms' has entered the Centre *via* the States.<sup>2</sup> We shall, however, concentrate in this paper on the administrative reforms in the States.

Since independence, there have been attempts by the governments, both at the Centre and in the States, to set up committees or commissions, composed either of an individual or a group of members, to look into the specific aspects of deficiencies in the administrative structure or behaviour. They represented generally *ad hoc* responses to *ad hoc* needs. The reports of these committees/commissions put together constitute a rich radical literature reflecting studied investigation into the micro-inadequacies of the system, or sub-systems, and prescriptive panacea, covering policies, their contents, the styles of organisational functioning, and the whole complex of programme implementation.<sup>3</sup>

By far the most comprehensive commission to take a global view of the 'systemic' as against the 'sectoral' inadequacies of public administration in this country is the Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) set up in January 1968. This ARC provided the most significant opportunity for having a total enquiry into the Indian system of public administration, embracing within its sweep even the State administration.<sup>4</sup> The Commission had submitted 20 reports on 20 different sectors of administration supported by 20 corresponding study teams, 13 working groups for specific subjects of investigation, 4 expert groups and one task force. These, evidently, make for a vast and rich source of information for an insightful research on the Indian system of administration and its shortcomings and change-models.

We are here concerned only with two aspects of the Commission's enquiry, namely, 'Administration at the State Level' and 'District

<sup>2</sup>Bata K. Dey, "Administrative Reforms—A Perspective Analysis", *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XVII, No. 3, July-September 1971. The Reports of Andhra Pradesh Administrative Reforms Committee (1960 and 1964-65), Rajasthan Administrative Reforms Committee (1962-63). The Punjab Administrative Reforms Commission (1964-66), Kerala Administrative Reorganisation & Efficiency, Committee, etc., would reflect the State Governments' concern for modernising their administrative system.

<sup>3</sup>For fuller details of the processes and methodologies of Administrative Reforms, Bata K. Dey, *op. cit.*

<sup>4</sup>Ministry of Home Affairs Resolution No. 40/3/65-AR (P), dated, January 5, 1966.

'Administration' which were amongst the ten agenda themes earmarked for the Commission.<sup>5</sup>

In the schedule<sup>6</sup> enclosed to the resolution, setting up the Administrative Reforms Commission, the items that were covered under administration at the State level were : (a) Examination of the organisation and procedures of State Governments with special reference to problems similar to those enumerated above; and (b) the need to strengthen administration in the States at all levels.

The main aspects sought to be covered under the district administration consisted of :

- (a) The role of the collector in respect of general administration and development administration, and as the agent of the State Government.
- (b) The role of the collector in the matter of the public grievances and complaints.
- (c) The relationship between the collector and panchayat raj institutions.
- (d) The relationship between the collector and departmental heads at the district and supra-district level.
- (e) The size of the district.
- (f) Personnel policies in relation to the post of collector.

As these two sectors were eminently inter-related, it was considered by the Commission to be convenient to integrate them together into one report,—the Report on the State Administration. There were, however, two study teams, one on State level administration and the other on district administration which, through their separate reports, assisted the Commission in formulating its final recommendations in this regard. Before we take up the key recommendations from the ARC's integrated Report on State Administration, insofar as they relate specifically to administrative reforms<sup>7</sup>, a few preliminary comments seem relevant. The Commission did not build up its proposals for reforms in the State in isolation of its general framework of recommendations for Central administration, and independently of certain overall problems and issues which the Commission sought to tackle. The same logic and consistency ran through both the sets of suggestions. Indeed, a number of points which arose in its enquiry into State administration arose also in the case of Union administration and, that is why, the Commission has

<sup>5</sup>Ministry of Home Affairs Resolution No. 40/3/65-AR(P), dated January 5, 1966.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>We are, for instance, leaving out recommendations on 'Machinery of the Government at the Apex', 'Panchayati Raj Administration', 'Public Service Commissions', 'Administration at the Supra-district Level', 'Executive Departments', etc.

suggested that it would be necessary, while going through the report on State administration, to peruse all relevant portions of earlier reports on the 'Machinery of Government of India and its Procedures of Work', the 'Machinery of Planning', 'Centre-State Relationships', 'Finance, Accounts and Audit', 'Personnel Administration', 'Delegation of Financial and Administrative Power' and 'Problems of Redress of Citizens' Grievances'.<sup>8</sup> The ARC's reforms proposals form, therefore, a package. And this backdrop needs to be kept in mind for a better and fuller appreciation of what the ARC had to say on administrative reforms in the States.

In its report on the 'Machinery of the Government of India and its Procedures of Work', the ARC came to the conclusion that "as the pace of development quickens, there would be new demands on the administration. The administrative machinery would, therefore, have to be continuously adapted to the requirements of new challenges (of course, within a broad, stable administrative framework)."<sup>9</sup> In the context of the States, it was considered important that each State secretariat should have a strong O & M unit which would carry continuously detailed studies for suggesting improvement in the administrative structure and methods of work. O & M units or administrative reforms cells, no doubt, existed in almost all the States in some form or the other. Even though these units have helped to promote O & M consciousness among certain sections of the administration, tried, with a modicum of success, to codify and simplify rules and procedures, and also carried out some work studied to effect economy in staff, the general picture that emerged in the State administration is one of diffusion of effort, if not confusion of purpose. Organisation and methods exercises in the States did not, as they should, address themselves to a total study of the structural analysis, organisational behaviour, and the other managerial processes; they satisfied themselves by paying limited attention to what were predominantly procedural matters and some staff economy measures. 'O' of the O & M did not, unfortunately, cover the entire organisation nor did 'M' encompass 'management', O & M lay stuck up in the quagmire of what was mundane in administration, procedures, and could not free itself from their cobweb. Problems of coordination, supervision, morale, motivation, developmental activities, etc., received little or no attention. It is not only important that O & M as an activity in the States should not be dissipated over minor or miscellaneous matters but should be concentrated on key problems of common interest to all—those problems the solution to which would help improving the effectiveness of the total administrative organisation in achieving its

<sup>8</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *State Administration*, 1969. Introductory Chapter.

<sup>9</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on the Machinery of Government of India and its Procedures of Work*, 1968,

set goals and tasks. In other words, O & M should be rescued from its narrow and limited groove, and dynamited into a positive management services movement.

An administrative organisation being a dynamic social institution, with its different parts interacting with each other, reforms need also to be conceived in this broad perspective. Needless to say, administrative reforms programmes in the States cannot be undertaken unless organisational structures and the staffing pattern of the O & M agency at the State level are changed and made research oriented. It is the common experience that the separables and the discards normally find an easy and smooth flow into the O & M, mainly because O & M is not integrated with the total programme of desirable administrative change in the States and given a high priority in the scale of importance. And this improvement-movement cannot again be built up unless there is a clearly defined, central direction from a focal unit, is headed by a sufficiently senior officer with innovative dynamism and staffed by a professional corps of people highly motivated and trained in the concepts and techniques of management of change, for launching a massive attack on the dysfunctionalities in the system. In the matter of administrative improvement, there is a great leeway to be made up in the executive agencies which have dealings with the public and also in other fields or subordinate formations of the government. It is only in this context that the following recommendations of the ARC should be appreciated :

The O & M/Administrative Reforms Units or Cells in the States should be reactivised and strengthened where necessary. A five-year broad perspective plan of O & M work should be drawn up and within its framework an annual O & M plan should be formulated with a broad scheme of priorities. O & M work should be conceived in a wider perspective covering all the aspects of an administrative organisation and it should be closely related to the attainment of its purposes.

The central O & M/Administrative Reforms Unit at the State level should be headed by a senior officer of the status of an Additional or Joint Secretary located in the Chief Secretary's organisation. Its organisational structure and staffing pattern should be research oriented. Apart from a nucleus staff with qualifications and experience in techniques of management analysis, the Unit should also have some personnel drawn, on short tenure, from functional areas, or services. The latter should be selected in the light of the programme of O & M studies to be carried out.

Each major executive department having dealings with the public

should have an O & M Cell.<sup>10</sup>

Another important aspect which was considered very significant, and rightly so, was that there was an urgent need for the creation of institutional arrangements for promoting rational thinking for the solution of current and prospective administrative problems and the role which autonomous professional organisations and academic institutions could play in this regard. As organisational problems grow more and more complex in dimension, O & M needs to be increasingly enriched not only by theoretical insights but also advanced techniques of data analysis, and evaluation. In the ultimate analysis, problems faced by the administration in the States, and particularly at the cutting edge level, are not merely procedural but have also significant sociological and behavioural overtones. Indeed, the management of change is essentially meeting the multi-dimensional problems and issues with inter-disciplinary approach tools. These problems would have rural and urban orientations; dimensions relating to the socially unprivileged, under-privileged and privileged sections of the society; public relations; semi-governmental organisations; trade and industry, inter-relation between political and administrative processes, etc. All this cannot be covered by internal efforts alone, within the governmental organisations. It is necessary in this context that there should be more and more coordination and collaboration between the university departments and professional institutions engaged in the teaching and/or study of public administration in the States, on the one hand, and the State Governments on the other. Some studies may be farmed out to these bodies which may inject a valuable new input, objective in its approach and rich in methodology, in the reform programmes of the government.

In the field of personnel administration and training in the States, the ARC has recommended<sup>11</sup> as follows :

#### *Personnel Administration*

The proliferation of personnel under the State Governments must be checked. Organisations and Methods Division and Staff Inspection Units where they exist must be activised and wherever they do not exist, they must be set up with a view to finding out better ways of organisation of work and more efficient methods of doing it and laying down rational standards for sanctioning of staff in future.

Staff which has been found to be in excess should not be kept on in their old duties but should be brought on to a separate pool which should

<sup>10</sup>ARC (India), *Report on State Administration*, Recommendation No. 51,

<sup>11</sup>*Ibidi*, Recommendation Nos. 39, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46 & 50,

be maintained on a supernumerary basis. Recruitment to surplus categories should be stopped. Surplus personnel should be redeployed where vacancies exist or come up. Many could also be trained in new skills such as stenography, etc., and employed accordingly.

A Personnel Department should be set up in the States under the chief minister. The functions of this Department would be :

- (a) Manpower planning, training and career development for all State personnel.
- (b) Liaison with the State Public Service Commission, Central Government, professional institutions, etc.
- (c) Talent hunting, development of personnel for higher posts and appointments to the level of under and deputy secretary and secretary in the State secretariats and equivalent posts in the field organisations.
- (d) Research in personnel administration.

An Establishment Board should be established in each State to select officers for the level of under and deputy secretary and secretary in the secretariat and officers of equivalent status in the field organisations.

Wherever the number of personnel engaged on a particular function is sufficient to constitute a viable cadre, a service should be set up for that function.

The field to which all the services should contribute on the basis of equal opportunity should be enlarged and no privileged position should be assigned to any particular service in respect of posts which can be adequately filled by all officers after training and/or experience, if necessary.

For the posts of heads of departments, men with initiative and drive as well as experience and knowledge of the subject matter should be appointed. The endeavour should be to pick out suitable personnel from the corresponding State service to man these posts. If no suitable men are available from the corresponding State functional services, there should be no objection to consider an IAS officer with the necessary background.

Suitable personnel from State services should also be considered for ex-cadre posts which are presently reserved for IAS officers.

Suitable personnel in the functional and specialist services (State as well as all-India) should man those posts of under and deputy secretaries in the State secretariat in which the predominant requirement is a particular functional or specialist knowledge.

For secretaries' posts, technical and functional officers of the State services should not be precluded. In areas such as agriculture, engineering and industry, there should be no bar to the consideration of

relevant specialist officers along with generalist officers for posting as secretaries.

Officers posted as collectors for the first time should ordinarily have at least eight years' service to their credit.

District charges should be divided into three categories having in view their workload and complexity. Commensurate remuneration should be attached, after proper evaluation of work content, to each of these three grades which should be fitted into the unified grading structure recommended by us in our report on personnel administration. It may, however, not be necessary for each State to have all the three grades of collectors. Some of them may be able to do with only two.

### *Training*

There should be set up in each State, where it does not only already exist, a separate training institution for organising a common foundational course for fresh recruits to class I or equivalent State Civil Services, institutional training for the probationers of the State Administrative Service and other generalist services, training in management for different levels of officers, and refresher courses.

Each major executive department should have a training cell to organise suitable training programmes for its personnel of different categories. Special attention is to be paid to organising suitable programmes of training for class III and class IV personnel, designed to improve their job skills as well as attitudes towards the public.

Facilities available at the university departments of public administration and other professional institutions may be availed of for organising some of the training courses.

The possibility of regional cooperation among a group of States for organising common training programmes may be explored. The Central Training Division of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, should operate a special programme of assisting the State Governments, in organising training courses, preparation of training materials, securing facilities for training of trainers and organising common programmes on a collaborative basis.

The new Department of Personnel should have a branch on training, charged with the responsibility of formulating the overall training policy, coordinating different training activities, arranging for training of trainers and promoting preparation of training materials.

Special emphasis should be laid in the foundational course on "building proper values and attitudes among the trainees and inculcating in them a sense of dedication to duty and service-orientation". Living with the people in a village for a first-hand study and observation of rural life and conditions should form an integral part of this course.

### A DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL FOR THE STATES

As is well known, the basic structure of the government organisation and the public services in the Central Government as well as in the States is more or less the same. That is why the ARC report on Personnel Administration contains certain ideas and suggestions which may not be directly relatable to the State administration but whose temper will be equally applicable to the States as well. The emphasis is rightly, therefore, placed on carving out a Department of Personnel in each State separately under the Chief Minister and the functional chart of the new department is also quite impressive in its newness, depth and sweep. Indeed, the suggestions have been made to cut for the department a role which was never performed by the erstwhile General Administration Departments (GAD) of services units in the States, preoccupied primarily as they were with postings, transfers, and other minimal, routine and non-promotional staff functions. To rid such units of their traditional orthodoxies and attach to them developmental functions like manpower planning career development, liaison with professional institutions, talent hunting, research in personnel administration, etc., are quite a significant new development.

Unfortunately, the recommendations made by the ARC in its report on State Administration were left to the State Governments for necessary action and implementation, on the premise, that they basically pertained to the State administration with which the Central Government was not directly concerned. Much, therefore, is not known as to what specific actions have been taken by the State Governments on the various recommendations, though there might have been occasional flashes from the State Governments. It would have been ideal if reports of implementation from the State Governments were regularly obtained as a follow-up of the ARC's report on the State Administration (and published for the benefit of researchers) which would have at least revealed the extent and nature of State participation in the administrative reforms movement in the country.

Following the trail of ARC, which concluded its deliberations in 1969, in the beginning of 1975, two experts in public administration, namely, Shri L.P. Singh and Shri L.K. Jha prepared a note on 'Improving Efficiency in Administration' at the instance of the Prime Minister and submitted it to her. The main purpose behind this exercise was not to recommend radical changes in the system but to identify certain crucial areas where action could be taken to improve the performance of the administration in a relatively short time. This note was circulated by the Prime Minister amongst the members of her Council of Ministers at the Centre and to all Chief Ministers and Governors/Lt. Governors of the State Governments and Union Territories.

This note, is significant in its forthright diagnosis of the ills of

administration and it maintains that despite efforts from time to time, administrative efficiency is today at a low ebb. No single factor contributes more to the hardships and frustrations of the people as inefficiency and delay in administration. This malady is attributable to two sets of factors: (a) structural and procedural, and (b) deficiencies of the human elements. The note suggests that if improvement is to be brought about, both these sets of factors have to be tackled simultaneously and with determination. The note also adds that no amount of reorientation of policy and working procedures would improve efficiency unless the general atmosphere and environment in which the officials function are congenial and conducive to discipline and work.

A 20-point administrative programme<sup>12</sup> has reportedly been chalked out from the various suggestions made in that note, namely :

Need for greatly improving working conditions—cleanliness.

Stress to be laid on strict enforcement of discipline and punctuality.

Unit in charge of internal administration should be especially entrusted with :

- (i) introduction of O & M with a view to ensuring speedy disposal of work;
- (ii) assessment of staff requirements, job requirements, training of staff and their placing; and
- (iii) house-keeping and staff-welfare.

Practical devolution of responsibilities inside the ministry.

Institutional arrangements to oversee time-bound disposal of items of work.

Decentralisation of legal advice.

Principles of selectivity and suitability to be followed in appointment to top posts in the Central Secretariat.

Performance assessment to be made more realistic and objective.

Arrangements for weeding out of below average officers.

- (i) Identification of training requirements of various ministries and departments for drawing up systematic programme to meet them.
- (ii) Critical appraisal to be made of the work done in the field of training with reference to the present day needs.
- (iii) Special attention to be given to training of officers at lower and intermediate levels.
- (iv) Emphasis to be laid on training by supervision.

<sup>12</sup>Nicknamed as such, taking a cue from the Prime Minister's 20-point Economic Programme.

Review of the need for the Indian Economic/Statistical Service.

Critical examination to be made of service rules and procedures for disposal of service matters and for speeding up redressal of grievances of public servants.

Analysis to be made of matters taken to courts during the last two years and the orders passed by the courts for drawing the attention of the ministries/departments to the defects and indicating steps necessary to avoid the repetition.

Administrative tribunals to be set up to adjudicate on the complaints of government servants.

Problems that ministries/departments are having with the Union Public Service Commission in matters of recruitment to be ascertained for discussion with the chairman UPSC to find mutually satisfactory solutions.

In order to review existing policy comprehensive studies of various aspects of personnel administration to be entrusted to a carefully selected officer without creating a new post in the department.

Widening of its concept of functioning by the Department of Personnel for providing leadership and guidance in the field of personnel policy.

Need for effective coordination between training needs and placement of officers.

Administrative Reforms Wing should take more positive interest in matters relating to the machinery of Government.

Need for administrative reforms in the States should be taken up with the State Governments.

These are being pursued vigorously in the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms, through the various ministries/departments at the Centre and with the State Governments. Though the suggestions made by the experts were made in relation to the Central Government, they also apply *mutatis mutandis* to the States whose involvement in the programme of administrative improvement was absolutely essential. Indeed, issues as are there in the Central Government arise also at the State level. Under our constitutional and administrative structure, the impact of administration on the public depends much more on what happens at the State level and even more in the districts than what goes on in New Delhi. The district continues to be the most important unit of public administration and the district officer occupies a place of pride amongst officials in the district. Whenever there is any kind of crisis or emergency, it is the district officers who have to provide the necessary leadership in dealing with the situation. Even in the course of ordinary functioning, the demand on the administrative machinery, both at the headquarters level and at the field level, is becoming more and more exacting particularly from the point of view of implementation of the

development plans. It is not generally appreciated that if the manifold activities of socio-economic planning—agrarian, industrial, urban—are to progress in unison, the importance of effective and timely coordination at the district level cannot be over-emphasised. This analysis should also go to emphasise that the traditional and orthodox demarcation of jurisdiction in regard to the Central and the State administration cannot be fully maintained; the puritanic dichotomy is no longer tenable if planning for progress, developmental goals and ideals of distributive justice on an all-India basis have to fructify. District administration is important not only from the State point of view but it is equally important from the Central, i.e., the country's point of view.

#### DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

It may be pertinent here to refer again to what the ARC had to say on toning up district administration. It said:

The district administration should be divided into two sectors—one concerned with 'regulatory' functions and the other with 'developmental' functions. The district collector should be the head of the former and the panchayati raj administration should have the responsibility for the latter.

The district collector and the president, zila parishad, should meet at periodical intervals to resolve matters calling for coordination between the regulatory and developmental administration. This procedure should be given official recognition in the legislation dealing with panchayati raj.

The collector and the district magistrate as the head of the regulatory administration in the district should exercise general supervisory control over the police organisation in the district. Except in an emergency, he should not interfere with the internal working of the police administration.

The collector and his officer should spend a prescribed minimum number of days on tour with night halts in camp. The tour should be utilised, among things, for the redress of public grievances on the spot wherever possible.

There should be only two administrative units whose heads are invested with powers of decision-making in the district administration—the one in the tehsil/taluka or a group of tehsils/talukas or a sub-division (in the States where there are no tehsils/talukas) and other at the headquarters of the district. The intermediary levels, where they exist, may be abolished.

Powers should be delegated to the maximum extent to the officer in charge of the sub-district administrative unit.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Administrative Reforms Commission, *Report on State Administration*, 1969, Recommendation Nos. 16, 17, 19 & 20.

The recommendations made in regard to district administration and administration at supra-district level have, no doubt, certain normative over-tones but an ideal, even if distant for the present, needs to be kept before the eyes for realisation in time. It must be said to the ARC's credit that the structure of their suggestions has an underlining of its own logic, apparently invalid though they may appear to be. Do we not see in most of the literature on development administration that law and order and regulatory functions should receive a separate treatment from developmental functions which should acquire, in the warrant of precedence, a higher place of attention ?

In this context, the setting up of an information and coordination unit at the Centre which would function as a clearing house of information on the various reforms activities and other innovative practices, followed in certain States, for dissemination among other States, should be considered. This would be a data centre which can be enriched by periodic exchange of information and personal contacts and joint meetings—seminars, conferences, workshops, etc.—devoted to the best interests of the Centre and the State Governments.

#### THE CONFERENCE OF CHIEF SECRETARIES

It will be necessary here to refer to another development which has accelerated administrative improvement movement in the States. On May 7 & 8, 1976, a conference of the chief secretaries was held in New Delhi devoted exclusively to the problems of administrative improvement and personnel management. The conference, inaugurated by the Prime Minister, had the following impressive agenda for deliberation :

- (i) Need for administrative reforms in the States.
- (ii) Review of the existing personnel policy and widening the concept of the functioning of the Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms to provide leadership and guidance in the field of personnel policy and administrative reforms.
- (iii) Institutional arrangements for time bound work disposal.
- (iv) Critical examination of service rules and procedures for disposal of service matters.
- (v) Delegation of financial and administrative powers to the departments and field and regional offices.
- (vi) Establishment of administrative tribunals and amendment of the Constitution restricting the jurisdiction of the courts.
- (vii) Redress of citizens' grievances.
- (viii) Weeding out of the below average persons.
- (ix) Premature retirement of Government servants.
- (x) Retirement in public interest of the members of the IAS.

- (xi) Training of civil servants and career management.
- (xii) Administrative coordination at the district level—role of the district magistrate.
- (xiii) Problems of the all-India services, and the economic and the statistical services.<sup>14</sup>

The chief secretaries from almost all the State Governments and Union Territories participated in the conference and for two days there were hard deliberations on the various issues on the agenda. The conference made altogether about eighty recommendations covering an array of subjects. Some of the major recommendations of this conference and action taken by the State Governments on them is indicated below. This is based on reports, flashed from time to time in the Press, other documented information and discussions. The purpose here is not to present a complete catalogue of action on all that has been done in all the States but to attempt an overall narration. (Lack of comprehensiveness in this regard is attributable to insufficiency of data or its non-availability).

*Setting up of Department of Personnel & Administrative Reforms:* Several State Governments have already taken steps to set up either a Department of Personnel & Administrative Reforms, or add a new wing/cell to the existing set-up to discharge the functions relating to personnel and O & M. A separate Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms already exists in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Maharashtra and Rajasthan. Uttar Pradesh has a Department of Personnel and also a Department of Administrative Reforms. The Governments of Assam, Gujarat, Karnataka, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Andaman & Nicobar Islands have already set up a separate department/wing of Personnel & Administrative Reforms with clearly defined functional lines. The Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur and Delhi have decided to set up separate departments/wings of Personnel & Administrative Reforms. Haryana's existing Administrative Reforms Branch and the Services Branch dealing with personnel matters meet the requirement of this recommendation. Setting up of a separate department/wing of Personnel & Administrative Reforms is under active consideration in Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Orissa and Mizoram.

*Redress of Citizens' Grievances:* Nearly all the State Governments have addressed themselves to the question of redressal of citizens' grievances. Many of the Governments have orders that every departmental officer in the district and lower levels should earmark one particular day every week for listening to and redressing the grievances of the public. This system is already in vogue in Bihar, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, and Delhi. The Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal

<sup>14</sup>Conference of Chief Secretaries, Programme and Agenda Notes, Department of Personnel and Administrative Reforms, New Delhi (May 7 and 8, 1976), (Mimeo).

Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, West Bengal, Meghalaya, Orissa, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Goa and Pondicherry have also issued orders to this effect. District grievances committees already exist in Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Mizoram. Such committees have been or are being set up by the Governments of Assam, Goa, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura and West Bengal. In Tamil Nadu the practice of joint touring by the district heads of various departments in rural areas to make the officers easily accessible to the public is in operation. In Andhra Pradesh the committee that is reviewing the implementation of the 20-point programme in the district has been entrusted with the work of redressal of citizens' grievances also. In the case of Delhi, the programme implementation committee presided over by the Minister of State for Works and Housing looks into the public grievances.

*Delegation of Financial Administrative Powers:* The Government of Andhra Pradesh appointed 3 committees in 1975 and necessary instructions for delegation have since been issued. Delegation of financial and administrative powers to the various departments has been made by the Government of Assam, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Rajasthan and Union Territory of Delhi. The Governments of Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland, Maharashtra, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Meghalaya, West Bengal, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Mizoram, Goa and Pondicherry have either set up or are setting up task forces to suggest delegation of financial and administrative powers to the secretariat departments, heads of the executive departments and regional/field organisations.

*Reforms at the 'Cutting Edge Level' of Administration:* The Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Meghalaya, Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Delhi have issued orders to carry out a drive or to identify specific areas/offices at the cutting edge level so that the quality of the service received by the members of the public at the points when they come into contact with the Government departments can be improved. Bihar and Gujarat have appointed task forces for this purpose and Himachal Pradesh has entrusted this work to the administrative reforms organisation and it has initiated studies in three public dealing departments, namely, (i) rural integrated development, (ii) health and family planning, and (iii) civil supplies. A training programme was recently organised by the Government of Pondicherry for various field functionaries like village officers, police officers and other development functionaries who come into close contact with the people. Uttar Pradesh has identified departments like food and supplies, transport and cooperation, where a review of procedure

is required in order to render better service to the public. The Government of Rajasthan has already initiated action in some of its departments. The procedure of payment of pension has been simplified and at Jaipur payment through the bank counters has been provided, the transport department has simplified the system of issue of tokens, permits and licences. The Government of West Bengal has also issued detailed instructions for simplification of procedures at the cutting edge level. The Government of Punjab has taken action for imparting training in public relations to personnel manning public counters.

*Task Forces for Simplification of Rules and Regulations:* The Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Delhi have already taken action to simplify/codify and unify service rules and manuals. In Uttar Pradesh the rules cell, existing in the Government since 1972, has so far finalised 160 service rules. The Department of Administrative Reforms of the State has already prepared/revised 14 departmental manuals. In Madhya Pradesh, the pension manual has been issued and rules regarding admission to training and medical colleges have been framed. In Andaman & Nicobar Islands, the police manual and block manual have been made up-to-date. In Delhi a task force for the purpose has been set-up.

*Constituting Monitoring-cum-Evaluation Cells.* Most of the State Governments have some set-up to serve the purpose of monitoring-cum-evaluation cells. In some of the departments of Himachal Pradesh, monitoring-cum-evaluation cells already exist. In Madhya Pradesh, a monitoring cell exists at the State level and evaluation cells in some of its departments. District cells are now being set up in Madhya Pradesh. The Rajasthan Government has such a cell in its Planning Department and such cells are now being set up in its other major departments. Andhra Pradesh also has a monitoring-cum-evaluation cell in the planning wing of its Finance Department. Some of the departments of West Bengal have such cells already in existence and are being extended to other departments. The Orissa Government has such cells in its Planning and Co-ordination Department and Agriculture and Cooperation Department. The Government of Bihar has already such a cell in the PWD Department and in the office of the Agriculture Production Commission. Assam and Punjab have decided to set up such cells in all their major departments. A monitoring-cum-evaluation cell has been set up in the Rural Development and Local Administration Departments of the Government of Tamil Nadu. Delhi Administration has constituted monitoring-cum-evaluation cells in its various departments. Meghalaya and Pondicherry have taken steps for strengthening the monitoring and evaluation cells.

*Empowered Committees:* Empowered committees with representatives

of the concerned departments for taking decision on the recommendations of the task forces/study teams/committees/commissions, etc., through meetings, instead of through notings and files, are already in existence in various forms in Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Delhi. Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Meghalaya and West Bengal have issued orders for constituting empowered committees. In Himachal Pradesh, there is the secretaries committee. Andhra Pradesh has a committee of officers and Bihar has a project review committee for on-the-spot sanctioning of the projects. In Tamil Nadu the existing system of inter-departmental meetings has been found satisfactory to serve the purpose of empowered committees. There is a weekly secretaries' conference presided over by the chief secretary in Tripura where all important matters are thrashed out.

*Performance Appraisal:* The Governments of Kerala and Rajasthan have already rationalised the system of performance appraisal and devised new forms for the assessment of employees' performance. The Government of Karnataka is reviewing the system and the Madhya Pradesh Government is revising the forms for self-appraisal where the work is quantifiable. The question of rationalising the appraisal system is being considered by the Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Mizoram.

*Premature Retirement:* Recommendation on premature retirement by Government at the option of an officer after 20 years of service or on the attainment of 45 years of age is being examined by the Governments of Tripura, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh and Maharashtra. Madhya Pradesh has reported that instructions exist, and are followed, for examining the case of persons who attained the age of 55. Uttar Pradesh has already a rule for voluntary retirement after 20 years.

*Training:* State Governments such as Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and Tripura have made arrangements for imparting training to their civil servants at various levels. The Government of Goa avails of facilities available in the training institutes of the Government of India, Maharashtra and other States. Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Delhi have taken steps to train officials in public relations. The Himachal Institute of Public Administration has prepared a comprehensive training plan for the year 1976-77. In order to give pre-entry and in-service training to officers of different departments of various levels, Andhra Pradesh has decided to establish a State institute of administration. Maharashtra has already an Administrative Staff College. Orissa is preparing a draft scheme to impart training to officials in public relations.

*Administrative Tribunals:* The Andhra Pradesh administrative tribunal (presided over by a High Court Judge) came into effect on

July 6, 1976 and has started functioning from 9th August. In Rajasthan the tribunal (presided over by an IAS officer) has been set up from 1st July. Uttar Pradesh has already constituted two public services tribunals in November 1975 to deal with service matters of the employees. The question of the constitution of another tribunal is under consideration. In Maharashtra and Karnataka, draft Bills on the subject have been prepared and are being processed. Setting up of an administrative tribunal has been accepted in principle by the Government of Bihar. The Governments of Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal are having the matter under consideration.

*Administrative Coordination at the District Level:* Under this head, several aspects such as investing the district collector with the power to record his appraisal on the functioning of the district level officers of the various departments, filling up the posts of collectors by sufficiently senior officers, night halts for the collectors for redress of citizens' grievances on the spot, avoiding frequent transfers of district collectors, etc., have been covered. In Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka collectors have been or are being vested with powers to record their appraisal on the general performance of district level officers of all departments both in the developmental and regulatory spheres. Appropriate orders have been issued by Nagaland and Meghalaya. Himachal Pradesh, Maharashtra and Tripura are processing this recommendation. A task force is being formed by West Bengal to work out the operational details for implementing this recommendation.

This kaleidoscopic panorama of what the State Governments have so far done generally in regard to the administrative reforms may appear to be satisfying to the average viewer, but the discerning eye will probably detect that no integrated strategy or planning has yet emerged for a massive attack on the enemy, which is the system (of administration) itself! Suffer as we all do from strategic myopia, we are absent mindedly indulging in what Jareb F. Harrison would choose to call 'innovative complacency'.<sup>15</sup> What is being done amounts really to using yesterday's remedies today for treating tomorrow's ills, and that too without perhaps a careful diagnosis! With the result, to use a different metaphor, we are trying to play hockey with the rules of cricket and, in the process, not playing the game at all, playing it miserably! To put it differently, retail trade in reforms can go to influence the administrative delivery system only incrementally but for foolproof result, as the experience of almost thirty years would suggest, wholesale trading, that is to say, a global systemic reform is what seems inescapable. Radical rhetorics apart, time is now for working for a fresh functional design, totally new administrative architecture and human engineering and for a wholly different culture, values and ethos! □

<sup>15</sup>Jareb F. Harrison, *Management by Obstruction*, London, Prentice-Hall, 1974,

# **Improving State Administration Search for Directions\***

**A. P. Saxena**

**A** VARIETY of reasons in the recent past have converged to focus attention on improving State administration. The scenario of State administration today reflects sharp changes in scope as well as content and function. It is commonly agreed that the extent of government purposes has radically altered in the decades following independence. Along with enlargement in scope, there has been a resultant complexity as well in all directions of State level administration. It will, therefore, be useful to note that the profile of State administration in the country has a radically different stance today. In the context of the emerging objectives in the new national ethos, it is thus appropriate that the subject of the improvement of State administration should be considered as one of contemporary relevance and priority.<sup>1</sup>

A quick survey of the functional coverage in the areas of State administration is worth a close look. There has been extensive proliferation of activities and it is not uncommon for a State administration to evolve a policy and administer it as well, be it the production and supply of text books or the development of electronic complexes.<sup>2</sup> Frequently, State administrations had to take over under their control extensive industrial organisations in the form of sick mills. It is important to realise that the *taking over* of giant industrially sick units and their *administration* involve an entirely different set of activities as compared to the industrial administration of viable enterprises with assured profitability and future prospects. Yet, as a logical part of the pursuit of public policies, State administrations in the country have been

\*From *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XXI, No. 3, 1976, pp. 392-402.

<sup>1</sup>Inaugural address by Prime Minister at the Conference of Chief Secretaries on Administrative Improvement and Personnel Management, New Delhi, May 7, 1976.

<sup>2</sup>For details of State enterprises and departmental undertakings—See *Commerce Year Book of Public Sector 1974-75*, Commerce, Bombay, 1975.

called upon to shoulder these onerous responsibilities within the framework of public accountability. The extent of the strain involved in this element of administration needs to be fully recognised, since a realistic assessment can alone establish reliable and responsive guidelines for improvement.

There can be scores of directions for improving State administration and any discussion group on the subject can generate a long agenda for action and priorities, subject to particular profiles. In such exercises a speculative analysis may supersede mere factual interpretations of current challenges. Against the pressing urge of the present-day action programmes, State administrations can no longer simply regulate and react but must take on themselves the responsibility for directing vastly new social and economic changes. "Government's functions have increased as people's assertiveness and requirements have increased."<sup>3</sup> The concept of public interest, general welfare and net benefit to the society as a whole emerge as the obvious determinants of public action by State administrations. Obviously the new role of State administration in the context of these dominating forces will not only increase the size and complexity of administration, but will necessitate new approaches and techniques to achieve improvement and secure assurances for the timely completion of policy goals and public tasks. It is this contextual consideration which would help the search for directions in improving State administration.

#### AGRICULTURAL ADMINISTRATION

As an illustration, the subject of agriculture may be examined as part of State administration. In the recent past, with increasing emphasis and commitment, agriculture has assumed a new concern for performance and productivity. Thus, it can be argued that the subject of agriculture as an element of State administration has radically changed as compared to, say, a decade or so back. Agricultural administration does not begin or end with the traditional tasks of State level organisation created for administering it; instead, it has assumed entirely new directions with technology as the dominating theme, and has created emphasis on the judicious availability of inputs to the farmers. A string of State, regional and national research institutes and agricultural universities continuously pour out new findings and developments which must be expeditiously translated into action for providing the eventual fruits to the tillers of the land.<sup>4</sup> It cannot be conceived that any State

<sup>3</sup>"Address by Shrimati Indira Gandhi", *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XVII, Oct-Dec. 1971, No. 4.

<sup>4</sup>M.S. Swaminathan, *Our Agricultural Future—Sardar Patel Memorial Lectures*, 1973, All India Radio, New Delhi.

administrative apparatus will delay and thereby deny the conversion of technology into a field reality. The subject of availability of inputs is by itself an enormous area of administration and it is no wonder that a wide pattern of departments and organisations has been created at various levels with the common objective of assuring inputs availability. State administration in this subject has not stopped at this stage and extensive studies are being made to categorise the farmer and the land which he tills.<sup>5</sup> This has been done on an inescapable logic that neither all farmers nor all the land is alike and, therefore, separate treatment must be found to meet and match their requirements.<sup>6</sup> The objective and content of administration involved in, say, the Small Farmers Development Agencies and Command Area Development Project<sup>7</sup> will be substantially different—a difference which will be accentuated further by the time horizon of the problem, which each is seeking to resolve. Since agriculture as a subject is emerging more and more important as part of the larger area of State *administration*, it is being increasingly realised that there is need as well as scope for improvement and what should now be discussed is in effect 'management of agriculture'.\* If this proposition is accepted, this is surely a fruitful direction towards improving State administration.

In pursuing the subject of management of agriculture as part of improving State administrative, a set of postulates are to be noted. The range of inputs needed to secure optimal agricultural production is, today, far and wide, and several of these have continuously to be juxtaposed to meet the requirements of the farmer.<sup>8</sup> New developments pushed by agricultural scientists and swift changes in the technology

<sup>5</sup>Waheeduddin Khan, and R.N. Tripathy, *Intensive Agriculture and Modern Inputs—Prospects of Small Farmers : A Study in West Godavari District*, Hyderabad, National Institute of Community Development, 1972.

<sup>6</sup>V.S. Gopalakrishnan, "Organisation for Command Area Administration in India", *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XIX, No. 2 (April-June 1973), pp. 177-86; Sudan, M.L., "SFDA and MFALA, Ambala : Some observations", *Journal of LBS National Academy of Administration*, 20:4 (Winter 1975), 1269-80.

<sup>7</sup>See K., Seshadri, *Agricultural Administration in Andhra Pradesh : A Study of the Process of Implementation of Intensive Agricultural Development Programme*, Bombay, Popular Prakashan, 1974.

<sup>8</sup>The Indian Institute of Public Administration in collaboration with United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and United Nations Asian Centre for Development Administration recently conducted a Regional programme on Management of Agriculture (6-24 Sept. 1976). The programme was designed to stimulate creative thinking on the role of managers in agricultural development. The programme objectives included identification of key management issues involved in implementing national agriculture policy and consideration of appropriate managerial interventions.

<sup>\*</sup>M.S. Swaminathan, "Perspectives in Agriculture", *Seminar* (Jan. 1973), pp. 63-6.

involved, make it imperative that the apparatus of State administration should take the leadership role in ensuring the quality, quantity and timely availability of the inputs. These features need to be noted especially as an area of administration—because several of the inputs have mutually conflicting inter-dependencies and the non-availability of one may provoke a chain reaction and upset the beneficial results of other inputs<sup>9</sup>. Also, the range of manipulation needed to achieve an optimum pattern of input availability is limited, both in terms of resources and inherent implementation difficulties. For example, in several situations apart from the matter of physical resources, attitudinal blocks emanating from long standing social and cultural stances, will need to be tackled before the inputs can lead to the desired results.<sup>10</sup> It is possible to add a set of similar issues, which at each stage can thwart the quest for productivity and development of agriculture.

Several studies in the recent past have also highlighted the interplay of administrative procedure and organisation setting as an important variable in this task. The large number of organisations available for these tasks do not always ensure appropriate and timely coordination, with the result that there is avoidable duplication, waste and delay. If this organisational aspect is a problem, the inputs could be *managed*, thereby implying a sharp shift in the traditional stance of administration. To enlarge the analogy, it can be visualised that the *management* of agriculture ought to be the style of administration of this sector and State administrations should come forward and react with adaptability to accept this proposition and thus provide a framework and impetus for improving State administration in this critical sector.

#### TECHNOLOGY AND ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

As an elaboration, mention may be made here of the inter-related area of the introduction of technology and the corresponding organisational change with particular reference to agriculture. The experience of the developed countries suggests that the acceptance and introduction of technology are a prime reason for ensuring the requisite organisational change—the logical assumption being that organisations

<sup>9</sup>J.C. Finn, "The Simulation of Crop-Irrigation Systems" in J.B. Dent and J.R. Anderson (ed.) *Systems Analysis in Agricultural Management*, John Wiley, 1971. Also see , Luz Mario Bassoco and Roger D. Norton, "A Quantitative Approach to Agricultural Policy Planning", *Annals of Economic and Social Measurement*, 4 (October-November, 1975).

<sup>10</sup>For a detailed treatment see : Guy Hunter, *The Administration of Agricultural Development : Lessons from Indian*, London, Oxford University Press, 1970.

must change before they will accept and practise a new technology.\* This has led to a set of situations where it has been possible to prepare organisations for the change implicit in the introduction of new technology. There is evidence to suggest that organisational resistance to the change, implicit in the introduction of new technology, can seriously disrupt production gains and even lead to dysfunctional situations. At the level of State administration it is a moot question to what extent the introduction of technology has been attempted with a clear, prior understanding and concern for organisational change. A cautious view can be taken that even if there was awareness of this correlation, there are not discernible decisions to suggest that new organisational designs and structures were conceived as part of the process of the organisational change flowing out of the introduction of new technology. In fact, evidence to the contrary asserts that either organisational structures were replicated or allowed to continue unchanged, irrespective of the introduction of technology. These issues become more dominant in the State administration of a subject such as agriculture where the impact of technology is assuming a more and more dominant role and in fact has emerged as the key determinant of higher productivity.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, a deep study of this correlation could well form a key area for improving State administration.

The problem of organisational change and the introduction of new technology is equally relevant to a more basic question, namely, the pattern of organisation as a vehicle of State administration. Without going into the historical perspective and evolution of State administration before independence, it can be noted that organisations in State administration normally portray characteristics which are peculiar to 'formal' organisations.<sup>12</sup> Contemporary research in this area indicates a series of related in-built advantages and disadvantages in the broad category of formal and informal organisations. The burden of the findings stipulate that in complex and fast emerging developmental administration, formal organisations may be inherently constrained in achieving their goals. At the level of individuals, forming part of the formal organisation, the extent of the strain is fairly well-recognised. Individuals report experiencing frustration because their self-expression is blocked. They also experience failure because they are not permitted to define their goals or the paths to these goals in relation to central needs.

\*For discussion of this theme in the Indian context see Edward A. Kieloch, "Innovation in Administration and Economic Development", *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XII, No. 3, July-Sep., 1966.

<sup>11</sup>Ch. Hanumantha Rao, *Technological Change in Distribution of Gains in Indian Agriculture*, New Delhi, Macmillan of India, 1975.

<sup>12</sup>See for discussion, Barry M. Richman, and Richard N. Farmer, *Management and Organisations*, New York, Random House, 1975.

They experience short-term perspectives and even conflict, because of a feeling that a change of job situations may not result in a different task configuration. Because of the implied degree of dependence and subordination, the directive element in administration also increases along with controls. In extreme situations there is even individual withdrawal, lack of involvement and alienation as a form of defence mechanism against the formal organisation. Conversely, a similar pattern of lack of fulfilment is in evidence in higher administrative levels also, who may feel curbed by limited authority, under-utilisation of abilities, hierarchical controls and a relatively non-participative administration style. Evidently, these will lead to inter-personal difficulties and distort organisational behaviour and goal achievement.

Some recent research studies state that a set of points for intervention can be established to secure the desired change at the organisation level and prepare it to meet the new pressures of change, with adaptation. It has been noted that organisational change as a deliberate activity requires a theory to guide the selection of points of intervention. Attempts to change organisations by changing individuals alone have been heavily criticised, and currently the practitioners are stressing the importance of developing approaches that are focussed upon the *whole* organisation as a functioning entity. In this background, planned organisational change will proceed by identifying and manipulating variables which are most readily controlled. As an illustration, the suggested intervention points<sup>13</sup> are:

- (a) *Tasks* which refer to the objective of the organisation.
- (b) *Technology* which is the requirement for the organisation at a point of time and will go beyond equipment, plant, and buildings because changes in technology might arise indirectly from changes in tasks or directly through improved methods of production. The existence of one form of technology will, therefore, be bound to determine the range of tasks.
- (c) *Structure*, referring to systems of authority, work flow, information systems, coordination and communication. Areas of centralised decision-making and established methods of problem-solving would be relevant.
- (d) *People* who constitute the organisation including their attitude and expectations, their extent of involvement and their appreciation of the extent of change implied as an adjustment to changes in task, technology or structure.

It must be stressed that these intervention points are highly inter-

<sup>13</sup>H.J., Leavitt, in Cooper, et al, *New Perspectives in Organisational Research*, New York, Wiley, 1964.

dependent, so a change in one may almost certainly force a change in the other leading to a situation of associated change of strategy.

The merit of stipulating these intervention points is manifold. They suggest the possibilities for multiple points of entry to secure organisation change. They also pin-point that whatever may be the limitation in isolating these points, they do open a positive direction for improving administration. This becomes particularly relevant when one is attempting to analyse the vast complex field of State administration and the directions for improvement. A score of guidelines and milestones will be needed and as an initial intervention strategy, the points mentioned above may provide the start for improving administration at an aggregate level—the State level.

It will be necessary to take note of the dissatisfaction with traditional bureaucratic styles of administration in coping with the problems of development and change, which today face State administration. Students of public policy and political science suggest that administration is prone to be easily permeated with the evils of bureaucracy, implying thereby that if the administrators behave as bureaucrats they reflect all the dysfunctional features of bureaucracy.\*

A writer on bureaucracy has even suggested that "nobody can be at the same time a correct bureaucrat and an innovator. Progress is precisely that which the rules and regulations do not foresee. It is necessarily outside the field of bureaucratic activities".<sup>14</sup> There is even talk of debureaucratising administration, but we do not precisely know how administrative systems move from a conventional model towards a more adaptive organisational system. In the case of State administration, the relevance of the political and legal nature of decision-making can pose a problem for this transformation and since it is a reality, it cannot be wished away. If administration is 'a basic social technique' and implies the guidance, leadership and control of the efforts of a group of individuals towards some common goal, then, clearly, good administration will be one which enables the group to achieve its objectives with minimum expenditure of resources and effort and the least interference with other worthwhile activities.<sup>15</sup> In this exercise, the combined pressure of achieving better results while dealing with more complex situations places a high premium on improvements in administrative ability. It is this conclusion which reinforces the need for introducing management techniques in order to improve State administration.

\*Bureaucracy has been recognised as a misused concept; for a workable basis there are different approaches to be examined but Hall's formulation appears worthy of note. See R. Hall, "The Concept of Bureaucracy: Its Empirical Assessment", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 69, No. 1, July 1963.

<sup>14</sup>Ludwig Von Mise, *Bureaucracy*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1944, p. 67.

<sup>15</sup>William Newman, *The Administration Action*, Prentice-Hall, 1965.

### USE OF MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

The need for examining the application of modern management approaches and techniques for improving State administration can now be argued against the above background. According to many management theorists, the choice is not between using or not using the important resource of management in administration.<sup>16</sup> Their use is imperative, if government has to play a meaningful role directed towards economic and social change. The real issue is, to what extent will administration pro-act to promote the use of management in a judicious systematic and dynamic way or continue to operate in outdated styles. The relevance for using management approaches and techniques in State administration can be further pressed on a number of reasons, e.g.,

1. Science and technology cannot be harnessed to the pursuit of all-round national development without the support of sophisticated organisation and effectively planned management systems,
2. Development planning which is today accepted as a major element of State administration cannot be attempted without a number of conceptual, analytical and other tools and techniques,
3. Design and installation of selected planning and control systems and techniques is essential for efficient management or regulation of a wide range of state enterprises—social commercial or industrial, and
4. Social welfare programmes for sizable weaker sections of society can only be administered and successfully monitored with the help of management systems.

To take an overall look, any State administration may find it difficult to effectively accomplish the above areas without appropriate management systems and the supporting range of analytical skills.

A planned acceptance and introduction of management techniques in administration will have a number of related benefits also. In the vast field of State administration, management approaches can generate emphasis on creativity, innovation and acceptance of *change*. While much progress has been made, there is also evidence of increasing concern with both the rate and degree of developmental change. From the standpoint of management, it is possible to highlight the reality of obsolescence of individuals, their thinking styles and the organisations they represent. In a positive sense, the techniques and approaches can

<sup>16</sup>“Inter-regional Seminar on the Use of Modern Management Techniques in the Public Administration of Developing Countries”, Oct-Nov. 1970, Vol. II, Technical Papers, United Nations, 1971.

enthuse State administration systems to learn to live and cope with complexity. It must be realised that organisations and individuals in any part of administration, if overwhelmed by change or complexity are unlikely to make their contribution to the current requirements by economic and social development.

#### ROLE OF TRAINING

In the context of these tasks eventually designed to improve State administration the role of planned training as an input can hardly be over emphasised. It is increasingly accepted that training can provide effective intervention for upgrading levels of performance of individuals and thereby of organisations. This premise can be effectively extended to the larger objective of improving State administration. The government's interest and commitment to training of its public personnel is today well-known.<sup>17</sup> The five year plans have stressed training as a desirable ingredient for accelerating the process of national development.<sup>18</sup> At the State level, a series of administrative reforms commissions, instituted in the last two decades have unequivocally stressed the need for training of State personnel for improving State administration.<sup>19</sup> Against this emerging acceptance of training there is also an increasing awareness on the part of the public personnel that they *need* training for improving performance, since they have necessarily to operate and survive in an environment which is dominated by an explosion of new knowledge and new skills.<sup>20</sup> Public personnel at various levels in administration today accept that training—formal as well as informal—alone can help them face the threat of obsolescence which can take place before their official superannuation. A number of State Governments have set up extensive training institutions which are doing a commendable task of providing training to a wide range of State personnel. Some of these institutions have done exceptional work and have to their credit standard publications and journals which periodically communicate the quality and quantity of their efforts.<sup>21</sup> The Department of

<sup>17</sup>See for example, the Prime Minister's Address at the Annual Meeting of the Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, Oct. 22, 1971.

<sup>18</sup>Training Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, "Five Year Plans Training", *Training Monograph No. 1*, 1969.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, "State Administrative Reforms Commission on Training", *Taining Monograph No. 7*, 1970.

<sup>20</sup>A.P. Saxena, *Training and Development in Government*, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi, 1974. T.N. Chaturvedi, "Public Service and Modern Challenges ; Need for Continuing Education", *Training Abstracts 10*, Training Division, Government of India, 1970 (mimeo.).

<sup>21</sup>See for example, The biannual journal, *Development Policy and Administration Review*, published by the State Institute of Public Administration, Jaipur.

Personnel and Administrative Reforms in the Central Government has provided an equally valuable leadership role and strengthened the process of training of public personnel.

However, at the level of State administration, there is need to take a fresh look and develop a two prong short term strategy for training. Firstly, there is need for a planned exercise of identification of training needs. It is well known that public personnel in the State administration display an unusual diversity of background, experience and skills. In large States, they are also geographically distributed in wide areas and that reduces professional interaction. Opportunities for formal training needed for large numbers of public personnel are equally limited and the supporting component of on-the-job training is not infrequently up to the desired level needed for individual and institutional development. There is, therefore, need for a careful exercise of identification of needs to cover, as extensively as possible, State organisations and development functions. In the absence of an individual based analysis of needs, a group based approach can be followed with advantage.<sup>22</sup> Several departments in the State Governments are adopting this approach and there is no reason why it should not become an important plank of the identification exercise.

Secondly, it is important that need-based plans for the training of public personnel are prepared for State administration. A training plan is visualised here as a statement of training requirements, which will reflect both short and long range training objectives designed to solve the immediate or anticipated problems of State administration. A good need-based plan would rank training needs in priority and include an estimate of resources required to meet the predicted needs. It will be seen that a plan which states needs and resources can indeed be a useful tool for improving the State administration. Besides, the availability of a need-based plan will have a number of other advantages as well. It will kill *ad hocism*, which is in evidence in the performance of training functions. It will generate a useful input for career development planning and can be eventually linked to overall manpower planning. It can also be evaluated. If the plan is prepared in the background of an earlier identification need exercise, it will also help public personnel to improve their present performance; it will assist them reach their full potential and prepare them to meet the challenges of technology and change. Above all, it will provide the personnel with an adequate input of knowledge and skills necessary to perform certain functions which are relatively unique to the emerging profile of State administration. A need-based training plan will thus assist in

<sup>22</sup>A.P. Saxena, "Identification of Training Needs : A Group Approach", *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XX, No. 1, Jan.-March, 1974,

fulfilling pre-determined needs and in achieving the objectives of training. It will equip the State institutions to design and forecast available training programmes in the context of the new challenges before the State administration.

#### ... THE SEARCH

It must be acknowledged that the pattern of State administration has reflected equally positive changes indicating genuine concern for efficiency and improvement. There is also evidence of confidence to cope with unforeseen challenges which keep on recurring. Almost continuously, procedural and structural adjustments are also being suggested to upgrade the capability of State administration to face the current urge for all round development. These are undoubtedly encouraging signs, but yet they point to a continuing question, whether administrative improvement is to be achieved through short-term, *ad hoc* arrangements or by more deeprooted solutions. Some time back, the Prime Minister suggested : "What we need, therefore, is revolution in the administrative system without which no enduring change can be brought about in any field." Today more than ever before, when all out attempts are being made to push closer the streams of development to the weakest sections of the community, the administrative system must aspire to "reflect the individual's contribution to human welfare and economic gain". It will be a challenging task for State administration to ensure that it is able to cope objectively, responsively and in *time* with the impulses of development processes which will dominate the content of administration in the next decade or even beyond and require high visibility in improvements at all levels in State administration. But while the issues are being analysed, it will be appropriate if there is a search for directions to secure, if possible, a congruence in the manifested goals of State administration. Let it be noted that there may not be an approach for improvement instead there may be a range. It may, thus, be necessary to concurrently operate over a range to secure the validity of directions for improving State administration.



# Priorities in Administrative Reforms\*

M. Sunder Raj

IN A recent study of the factors inhibiting the rapid economic development in India as a whole, an American economist had concluded that there are four possible 'pivotal scarcities' which are the causes of the under-development in the country. According to him, these are :

1. will to work ;
2. decision-making, skilled manpower and technique;
3. domestic savings; and
4. foreign exchange.

While there may be differences of opinion about the relative importance of these factors, there is no doubt that decision-making ranks very high amongst them, and is, in fact, a basic requirement for the correction of the other scarcities listed also. For example, where the will to work is lacking, the steps to inject energy into the system are required to be taken, it is a problem in decision-making as to which of the various available methods of education, incentive, persuasion or coercion should be adopted in any particular set of circumstances. Thus, the speed with which development is achieved, depends upon the speed with which correct decisions are taken in the political and economic fields.

## POLITICS AND ADMINISTRATION

The functionaries who are called upon to take these decisions are the public administrators on whom falls the responsibility for executing the policies of the political rulers of the country.

Public administration is, therefore, the means through which the State achieves its political and economic ends. It is a necessary adjunct to the political institutions, from whom it draws its power, and to whom

\*From *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XIII, No. 3, 1967, pp. 235-67.

it is ultimately accountable. In a modern State, a distinction is always drawn between the centres of political power, namely, the ministerial, the executive and the legislatures on the one hand, and the public administration on the other. In an authoritarian State, however, it is only in the form of the organisations, if at all, that this distinction is observed. In such countries, the politician not only lays down the policy, but he also participates in the day-to-day execution of these policies. There the politician and the administrator are one and the same. But even in less authoritarian and more democratic set-ups, where the role of administration is merely one of an executive body carrying out the policies which are determined elsewhere in the political set-up, the purposes and functions of public administration are prescribed for it by the political requirements of the State. In either case, the only area in which administration has some freedom of operation is in its methods of working, but even here the scope for such freedom differs between authoritarian and democratic states. To the extent to which the people of a State have a voice in their government, the administration is required to shape its methods to suit needs of the people affected by its activities and, if popular demand requires it, poor and inefficient methods may have to be substituted for the more rational but less popular ones. The administrator of an authoritarian State, on the contrary, has the advantage that, in working out his methodology, he need not pay as much attention to the feelings of the human beings affected by his actions. Rationalism and efficiency are the only criteria he need consider. This no doubt gives him an advantage in the short run, but in the final result he often finds himself the loser, for, the more it is beaten and cowed down, the more successful is human nature in defeating the schemes of its oppressors.

#### *The Role of the Modern State*

The purposes and functions of the State, therefore, provide the limits within which the public administration of the country has to operate.

Unlike its predecessors, the modern State is expected to take an active part in the acceleration of economic and social changes necessitated by the great technological applications. This, in turn, causes the State to enter into a larger field of activities than before. Not only is the State required to act as the prime mover in economic and social matters, but the direction in which it is required to act is the spreading of economic prosperity over the populace as a whole by breaking down and obstructing privilege. Even where complete socialism is not the goal, the area of public services has steadily grown larger and larger.

#### *Purposes and Functions of Public Administration*

Thus, the objectives, goals and areas of function of the State have become enlarged, and this has correspondingly affected the purposes and

activities of the organisation for public administration. The administrator is no longer merely a conservative preserver of the existing order, or even a neutral umpire over freely operating social forces, but an active participant in the social and economic re-organisation of the country. To be successful in this endeavour, it is necessary that the personnel in the administration have faith and belief in these goals. If the administration as a whole, or at least its leadership, does not subscribe to these ideologies—as it very often happens in a country emerging from the traditional stage—progress is hindered and the rapid advancement of the society becomes difficult. Social change means a change in the system of values, and it cannot be achieved unless those engaged in the process of affecting the change themselves subscribe to the new system of values.

#### *Administration and National Progress*

In an underdeveloped country, the responsibility of public administration in this matter is very much more than in countries which have attained a high level of development. In underdeveloped countries the mass of the people are poor and uneducated, and are deeply attached to the ancient traditions and conservative ways of life. The leadership in the changes to be effected in such a society falls on the administrator even more than on the politician, for it is the former who has to carry out all those acts necessary to give effect to the ideals which the latter sets before the country. The administrators, in such circumstances, are not merely the servants of the people, but are in fact the elites of the society who have to, firmly though unobtrusively, guide the society on to the new changes. At the same time the administrator is expected to train the people for self-government so that they may take on themselves those activities which in a democratic society ought to fall on the people themselves, and not on the administrator. Nor can he afford to delay the provision of new facilities, such as schools, hospitals, housing, etc., which the society requires urgently. The orderly movement to development requires a continuing trust in the administration by the people. Such trust cannot but be shaken, if the promises to the people are not fulfilled.

#### ATTITUDES AND TECHNIQUES

##### *Ideologies*

If the success of the plans for social progress and economic development through State intervention is not to be jeopardised, the first essential task is to ensure that the administrators do not have, consciously or unconsciously, attitudes opposed to the planned changes. Unfortunately, the importance of, and the need for, ideological education of the administrators has not been recognised in the democratically-inclined underdeveloped countries. But, even if this need came to be given due recog-

nition, there would still be difficulty in working out and implementing any scheme of philosophical re-orientation. Critics and opponents of the accepted policies would oppose this on the ground that this contravenes the theory of administrative neutrality, according to which public servants should remain aloof from policy matters, and should not let their ideologies bias their decisions either way in such matters. There is much to be said for such a theory of intellectual and social isolation of public servants when the political and social issues are not of a profound nature. But where the changes planned for are fundamental in nature, and affect deep traditional sentiments, it is too much to expect that they can be easily achieved through an administration which itself is steeped in these traditions. If social and economic reforms are to progress rapidly in an undeveloped country, therefore, attention should be given early to the development of proper philosophical attitudes in the administration.

#### *Techniques of Administration*

One way of achieving this would be to include a course in administrative ideologies when training is imparted in the technical aspects of administration. For, thanks to the variety, number, and complexity of functions that the modern State is called upon to perform, it has become necessary to equip administrators for their tasks by imparting special training. Moreover, a considerable volume of knowledge has been developed about the problems of methods and organisations in administration. Decision-making, which at one time was considered an art, has been subjected to a rigorous analysis, and some aspects of it are now treated as an organised discipline capable of being subjected to scientific methods of study.

#### *Training in Techniques*

Unfortunately, however, sufficient attention is not at present being given in this country to the training of the administrators in these techniques, though there has been some attempt at improvement in the last fifteen years. An Institute of Public Administration has been set up in Delhi. A short course in administration is included in the training of all class I officers, including IAS, IFS, IAAS officers, etc., at the time of their initial recruitment. An Administrative Staff College has been set up in Hyderabad where a small selected group of officials who have put in a few years of service are given refresher courses. Similarly, the Railways have a Staff College at Baroda for their officers. An occasional seminar rounds off the total effort in the country. But all this is not enough, considering how vast the country is, and how great the need for trained administrators for all the innumerable and complex functions which the State has undertaken to perform in this highly technological age. A UN report says : "In simpler days good administration was important, today

it is essential," and this need is greater still in underdeveloped countries struggling to slough off their poverty. A vast scheme of training of administrators is, therefore, one of the steps necessary for the improvement of public administration, and the training should not only be in the basic skills, but should also be directed towards the development of proper attitudes and beliefs.

### ADMINISTRATION AND THE PEOPLE

#### *Administration as Service*

Before proceeding to examine the methodology of the public administration in India, a few remarks are necessary on the general relationship between it and the people. In theory, administration is the servant of the people, being the tool of the State, which is itself only the representative of the people. Actually, however, the political mechanism of the modern State being very complex, this relationship tends to be hidden in ordinary working immediate and direct popular control over the day-to-day activities of the administrators being not feasible. Moreover, in colonial and other types of authoritarian governments, the attitude of the administrators towards the people is usually paternalistic—when they are not antagonistic—and the people have to silently obey the instructions and orders of the administrators who are the accepted masters in the situation. Even after the people have achieved power in such countries, the pre-independence psychology tends to be carried over. Such indeed is the case in India. Not only do the citizens find themselves often treated without that respect and dignity which is their due, but even in their material interests they are affected adversely. Administrators do not always act with justice, impartiality and reasonableness. Moreover the people, especially the poorer sections, are often not aware of what the laws and regulations are, and what their privileges under them are. The administrator, whose duty it is to make these known widely, fails to do so, and this provides an opportunity for the exploitation of the unfortunate citizen. An additional factor which contributes to this state of affairs is the secrecy which surrounds the whole administrative process. Of course, there are certain aspects of the administrative function which it is essential in the public interest to conduct in privacy, but this is justifiable only in the case of such measures as public security, the conduct of international relations, etc. There is no reason why other activities of the administrators should be shrouded in the mystery in which they are at present. Many a maladministration escapes uncorrected under this cloak, and the unfortunate victims have no remedy.

#### *People's Right to have Information*

It is essential, therefore, that information should be available to the

citizens not only about the manner in which administration functions generally, but also about the particular way in which individual cases are disposed of within the administration. At present we have no statutory provisions to ensure this. The Question Hour in the Parliament provides a means of getting some information occasionally, but the rule which prohibits individual cases being brought up there limits its utility. In the United States, legislation has been recently enacted, giving the right to the citizens to have information on the way in which cases affecting him have been dealt with in the administration, except where national security is involved. There is a great need for similar legislation in this country.

#### *Ombudsmen*

But even this would not be sufficient to help the individuals in their struggles against the Leviathan of the modern State. There are many types of cases where the victims of maladministration find themselves without satisfactory legal remedies, such, for example, as arises when excessive delays occur in the settlement of a citizen's dues, or where an administrator fails to discharge functions which are normally expected of him, though no legislative or other statutory provision exists compelling him to do so. Some institution, such as the ombudsmen, who has the authority to interfere with the executive process, and to whom the citizen could turn in such cases, requires to be statutorily established. It is true that, in a vast and backward country like ours, where the administration exercises enormous powers, the institution of ombudsmen will in turn have to be very large in size. There is every danger that ombudsmen will themselves become tied up in red tape. But these objections notwithstanding, the current situation requires an institution of this nature urgently. It may, perhaps, be started in an experimental and limited way, and its success watched before it is made more general.

#### • ORGANISATIONAL ASPECTS

#### *Operational Tactics*

Purposes, functions and relationships with the citizens are aspects of administration external to it. They define the limits with which it has to operate, and they provide the ultimate criteria for judging its utility. Within these limits, however, the administrative set-up functions as an autonomous organised social system for the performance of the tasks of government. The responsibility for drawing up the strategy for attaining the national goals devolves upon the political organs of the State, but it is the administration which has to work out the tactics within this larger plan. Though subject to the overall constitutional and political controls, it has to work out its own operational principles so that it may carry out its functions efficiently and economically.

### *Efficiency Factors*

The factors affecting the efficient operation of administrative systems in general have been, over the recent years, the subject of very exhaustive studies. They have shown that these factors could be brought together under three broad groups. These are, firstly, organisational structure, that is, the way the forces are marshalled, secondly, the methods of working adopted within the system, and thirdly, the quality and behaviour of the personnel in the system. These by themselves, however, do not provide any criteria of efficiency for a public administration, the ultimate test for which would be its success in tackling a given task. The fundamental task of administration is decision-making subject to the requirements that the decisions are correct, and are arrived at efficiently, speedily and without undue friction.

### *Administrative Inefficiency*

Judged by these tests, there is no doubt that public administration in India is very much wanting in efficiency. It is common experience, acknowledged by the political rulers and the administrators themselves, that it takes great lengths of time for decisions to be reached even in minor matters. Plans and projects are invariably delayed in their execution. There is a great tendency to avoid responsibility at all levels. Very often all relevant data are not taken into consideration in drawing up plans. Moreover, schemes which look quite satisfactory on paper ultimately run into obstacles, because the human element in them has been overlooked. Personnel chosen for the execution of the tasks are not sufficiently trained or do not have the proper attitudes. Or, as it happens very often, sufficient thought had not been given, while drawing up the plans, to the impact they would have on the people affected, and their reactions to it. This factor is especially important where the schemes are such as affect the social life of the people, their ways of thinking and working, such as the community development and village uplift projects.

### *Causes of Inefficiency*

To trace the factors in the administration responsible for this, and which consequently would require correction, it is necessary to examine it in more detail from the three organisational aspects referred to earlier, namely, structure, methods and personnel.

## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

### *Structural Tiers*

Public administration in India is organised in two more or less independent tiers at the Centre and the States level respectively. This is

because the Constitution is a federal one under which political power is distributed between the Central and State governments, each of which is concerned with certain specified subjects only. The area of concern of the State governments includes community development and cooperative activities which are of vital importance for the transformation of a backward country. The machineries of the Central and State governments deal with the normal problems of public administration of a country, including such public services as railways, postal services, etc. In addition, the State in India has, with a view to aiding the rapid progress of the country towards modernisation, taken over the control of certain commercial and industrial enterprises. In order to have the management of these undertakings conducted on business principles, their control is vested in autonomous agencies, such as corporations, or boards of directors formed under the Companies Act, etc. Though the organisational problems of such public sector undertakings present special features, they nevertheless form part of the general public administration in the country and may be treated as such.

#### *Historical Survey*

A brief historical survey of the growth of public administration in India may perhaps help to formulate the problems of administrative structure in the country.

The framework of the administration at present in India has been built over the years under the British rule, which itself took over some of the forms from its predecessors in the various areas, the Mughals in the north, the Mahrattas and the various kingdoms in the south. The base of all administration from the earliest historical periods, and even prior to the coming of the Mughals, has been the village units administering justice and conducting their local affairs through their own caste councils or panchayats. Kingdoms rose and fell, but the village units survived and functioned through all the political changes. The central authority in these kingdoms exercised control of varying order over these local units. Some like the Gupta Empire exercised a strong central authority, which gave a measure of stability to the empires, at least for some time before internecine warfare toppled them down. But in the case of most others, the ambition to expand their territories led only to brief glories followed by disaster, not the least important cause for which was their failure to organise their central administrative machinery. However, in spite of the fact that the land was split up into so many independent kingdoms, the system of government in the villages was more or less the same throughout India, and the legal or moral codes which governed the society everywhere was more or less based on the same principles and ideals. This was because of the cultural influences of the Brahmanical religion which, as it spread gradually down the rivers, to the plains and

along the coast, shaped the thinking of even those races and people who did not completely become brahmanised. Thus a cultural uniformity was achieved even without political centralisation. India was felt to be one even though it was not seen as such.

It was the Mughals and the other Muslim invaders who brought with them their Persian and Arab experience of central administrations which they imposed over the village units without attempting to destroy them. Thus Subahs were created, and executive and judicial administration organised in tiers spreading from the centre down to the local units. The form of administration was thus a dual one, a strong central and district organisation functioning through local autonomous units at the village level, which remained unshaken even where proselytisation took place on a large scale.

For the first time in her history India attained political unification under the British, who came as traders and remained to rule. For both these purposes the British found it convenient to build up a strong central government duly supported by local provincial authorities, the base unit of the whole structure being the district. This was the Moghul system duly adapted to the British needs. At the same time great social and economic changes took place in the country. The peaceful conditions that prevailed encouraged the growth of cities, and a distinctly urban shift took place in the centres of social power. The form of government having become more autocratic, the villages also ceased to enjoy the political power which they had unobtrusively exercised throughout the previous centuries of turmoil. In their role of rulers in India, the objective of the British was mainly to maintain law and order with the minimum interference in the social and economic institutions of the country. To man the highly centralised district-based administration, a bureaucracy was developed, great care being devoted to the problems of selection of personnel, their training and specialisation. The system was perfectly organised with clearly designated hierarchical distribution of executive and judicial power. Procedural codes were evolved and the organisation perfected.

The structure and form of the administrative organisation had been brought to a high pitch of perfection by 1947, when India attained her independence. It was the envy of other colonial empires, and served the British well in the purpose for which it was forged, namely, the maintenance of law and order, and pacification of a large colonial territory, whose people differed in language, culture, religion, etc., and whose sense of nationality was rather tenuous. Moreover, it was an administration which withstood the strain of steady political changes and reforms, leading to a gradual devolution of power from the colonial masters to the local people.

### *Post-Independence Problems*

Following independence, the trained foreign bureaucrats departed, but their place was readily taken by Indian officers, and the transition to constitutional democracy took place smoothly without any breakdown in administration. Soon thereafter, however, the economic and social policies of the new government posed new problems of administrative structures.

### *State Enterprises Management*

Firstly, the State has begun to act as an entrepreneur in the economic field, and new forms of administration had to be created to man these industrial and trading enterprises. Thus have come into being autonomous corporations and boards of directors of limited companies in the public sector. These, however, have not succeeded in solving the basic problem of organising these enterprises in such a way as to give them flexibility of operation in all but the highest policy matters in which only government should have the final say. Though in theory the autonomous bodies do have this freedom, in actual practice, however, this is not so. Neither the legislative nor the executive arms of the government are prepared to vest in them such freedom from accountability. What is required is to develop a type of managerial organisation as in the United States, where owners' interference with management is minimal, and their control very nominal. Such a managerial revolution cannot be achieved without a revolution in social thought. It also involves training and building up a new type of managers. This is an extremely urgent matter, as the success of the mixed economy, which is an integral part of India's ideal of a social pattern of society is dependent upon this. Recent developments have clearly demonstrated that the fundamental problem of the public sector undertaking is one of manning them.

### *Grassroots of Social Democracy*

Secondly, through such activities as community development, rural cooperative societies, the zila parishads, the village panchayats, etc., the State is attempting to build up the grassroots of social democracy, which in the present conditions in the country implies vast social changes. It involves educating large masses of superstitious and backward people to change their attitudes and re-orientate their fundamental philosophies of life. New bonds of social relations have to be forged in the place of the caste system which is being broken up.

This being a completely new field of activity in which the administration has had no previous experience, its success requires the creation of a new type of organisation and a new kind of administrator. At present, however, all that has been done is to create new departments working through the district collectors as in the classical manner. The outlook of

the personnel operating these schemes differs little from the other bureaucrats. It is not surprising, therefore, that the progress of establishing democracy at the grass-roots in the country is rather slow. A piece of administrative reform urgently necessary for the success of this praiseworthy endeavour is, therefore, the creation of specialised agencies, not organised in the conventional manner.

### *Centralised Planning*

Thirdly, a national policy of central planning for controlled development has been accepted by the State, and is being implemented from 1951, when the First Five Year Plan went into operation. This has given rise to a number of problems in administration. These are distinct from questions of a political nature, such as whether planning should come from above or below, to what extent, should society be subject to planning, how the people should be associated in the formulation and execution of the plan, what modifications should be made in the relationship between the Centre and the State which have distinct powers in a federal Constitution so as to make centralised planning effective, who should constitute the members of planning body, etc. Some of the purely administrative questions that arise are :

1. in case the planning body is set up outside the normal executive organisation of the government, as the Planning Commission in this country is, should its advisory services be arranged in the existing organisation, or should it have an administration of its own for this purpose;
2. to what extent should the Planning Commission concern itself with the details of the plan;
3. what should be the Planning Commission's responsibility for reviewing the progress of the plan, and what reports is the Planning Commission entitled to ask for from the executive ministries;
4. what is the mechanism for dovetailing the work of the planning machinery in the States with that of the Centre; etc.

It must be confessed that the administrative organisations for planning have grown haphazardly without any systematic examination of these problems. The result is that the Planning Commission today is a huge mammoth organisation—almost 'a parallel Government' in the words of Pandit Nehru—whose thinking often appears as if it is not related to the factual situation in the country. Moreover, in spite of its large staff, it does not appear to have evolved a satisfactory organisation for the collection of such of the basic data necessary for sound planning. The relationship between the planning body and the executive organs,

especially in the States, is not also very happy. No procedure has been worked out for an effective control over the progress of the plan schemes.

Few people would disagree that our plans have gone away. The most important reasons no doubt lie elsewhere in the political field, but the failure to set up a proper organisation for the administration of the Plans has also been a contributory factor. Some may question the efficacy of centralised bureaucratic planning of the nature of our five year plans, in a State which is not totalitarian. Whatever the views on the subject, if it is proposed to continue the policy of centralised planning, the least that should be done is to reorganise the administrations, so as to eliminate overlapping of functions, and to make planning flexible and related to factual conditions.

Except in these three directions, the formal structure of the Indian administration may be considered to be quite sound. It has grown with, and adapted itself, to the social and political life in the country. In this respect the administration can compare favourably with that in any of the modern advanced countries. But this cannot be said with the same unequivocalness of the way the structure functions.

#### INFORMAL GROUPS AND ESPRIT DE CORPS

##### *Growth of Bureaucratic Rigidity*

It seems to be an unfortunate law of growth of institutions that, in the early stages when their forms are vague and their methods somewhat informal, they function easily, though they present an appearance of confusion and irrational organisation. As the institutions grow, and forms and methods are systematised and rationalised, they become rigid and inflexible. The personal touch which existed earlier is lost in rules, conventions and forms. This is the stage when administration becomes a hated bureaucracy.

Long before they were called upon to quit the country, the British had noticed this tendency in the Indian Administration. The early stages of the pioneers and military conquerors being over, they realised this to be the natural consequence of the consolidation and settlement stage of their empire. To them, however, this was no serious evil, as their main objective was to maintain law and order, and to hold off reforms, changes and modernisation of the country as long as possible. There were of course some even amongst them who bemoaned the growth of bureaucracy and who attempted in a half-hearted way to effect reforms. But the evil had not grown in their time to such proportions as to cause severe criticism, or to call for urgent administrative reforms.

##### *Informal Groups*

The formal structure of an organisation lays down the rules for the

conduct of business both within and with outsiders. Vertically it distributes power within the organisation, indicating the various hierarchical levels and the relationships between them. It prescribes the functions and duties of the various officials, and the nature and mode of rewards and punishments. Within this framework officials function, but the manner in which they do so is determined by other factors, called face-to-face factors or primary groups. As human beings their passions and emotional attachments guide their conduct.

#### *The ICS in Pre-Independence*

What saved the British administration in India from the excess of bureaucracy, which it has developed later, was the close relationship that existed amongst the British officials of the Indian Civil Service, who formed the core of the administration. They formed a coterie with a pride in their role of rulers of a mighty empire. They came from the same class, and had a common philosophy and outlook on the world shaped by the public schools and Oxbridge. Except for the post of Viceroy, all the posts in the country were open to them. They were both the policy-makers and the executive officials. Though in their formal relations a certain distance separated the juniors from the seniors, in their social life and in clubs the levels disappeared, except to the extent necessary for decorum. Thus was forged a unity of thought and aims, and an avenue through which red-tape could be cut, and formalities waived whenever necessary. Amongst such a privileged class there was no need for nepotism or sycophancy. This was the informal group which gave life to the administration and saved it from brittle rigidity.

#### *Post-Independence and Vertical Rigidity*

With the departure of the British, the informal groups which have taken their place within the administration are altogether different in character. In the first place there has been a clear-cut division between, on the one hand, the policy-makers, who are the ministers and the legislators, and on the other, the official class. Not only do the two categories reach their offices from different directions, not only is there, in most cases, a wide difference of class, community and language, but more important still, there is a complete social isolation between the two. Moreover, the codes of conduct for government servants operate to isolate them from the social and community life of the country. The result is that the administration functions more or less autonomously, the offices being like monasteries, shielded not only from the public gaze, but even from the ministers and the legislators, who, even if they had the time to venture into the regions of bureaucracy, would not be able to find their way through its mazes.

In fact, it is not a single administration that we have in this country, but a large number of separate and independent units. It is not merely that the municipalities and State Governments have their separate administrations which are independent of the Central Government, but that their mutual relations are often bitter and full of animosity. Even between the various departments of the Central Government the relations are none too good, thus making effective co-ordination almost impossible. The position is worse where the ministries and their field offices, called subordinate offices, are concerned. Cross-cutting all this is the Ministry of Finance, and its branch offices of the financial advisers, whose relations with the executive ministries and officers are, to say the least of it, deplorable. As for the Accounts and Audit Offices, they avenge the indifference with which they are treated and their exclusion from executive authority by being as difficult as possible with a lordly air of indifference. Public Administration in India, therefore, appears as a large number of independent units, each one autonomous in itself, with its own goals, and objectives. There seem to be no horizontal fields of contact between them, the organisational lines running vertically, and establishing contact only at the topmost level. When officials of two units require anything of each other, they agree to take it up with their ministry or government.

#### *Post-Independence and Horizontal Rigidity*

Within these units themselves, the position is not any better. A rigid formality reigns in the relationship between the various hierarchical levels and there is a high degree of status consciousness. Officials are unapproachable even to those immediately below them not only officially but also socially. Unlike the British, the new officers come from different communities and areas, with different customs, manners, language and outlook, the product of the regional biases in education and social development. Even the more senior officers who had been brought up in the British rule are now affected by these changes. In such circumstances, caste and community determine the informal group associations, thus reflecting within the administration the general social conditions in the country. These tendencies of rigidity and atomisation which have grown rapidly in the last twenty years since independence, and which seriously and adversely affect the character of the administration cannot be counteracted merely by any set of reforms within the administration. They can only change as the general social consciousness changes in the country.

#### *Building up an esprit de corps*

Meanwhile, to some extent these tendencies are counteracted by the extension of the principle of constituting all India services in such

departments, as education, agriculture engineering, etc. Such all-India services do provide the necessary link between the Central and State administrations through a cadre of officers common to both. However, they also tend to erect caste-like barriers between the various hierarchical levels, thus making the organisational structure more rigid. What is called for is a judicious mixture of promotions and direct recruitment at various levels, and of inter-state transfers, as well as transfers between the State and the Centre. Suitable monetary and other incentives should be extended to those willing to accept the hardships of such transfers. Thus only can an *esprit de corps* be developed which would give the various administrative units of country the feeling of being engaged on a common enterprise.

#### DECENTRALISATION AND DECONCENTRATION

It is a basic principle of democracy that local transactions should be conducted as close to the concerned citizens as possible. Decentralisation—as distinct from delegation of authority—of public administration is, however, a matter which falls within the sphere of politics, for it is the political constitution which sets the limits to devolution of functions to local authority. But where decentralisation is not possible, some measure of geographical deconcentration of the ministerial functions to regional and area offices is necessary, if the citizen's interests are to receive the necessary attention, and he is not to feel that the administration is remote and, therefore, indifferent to him.

#### SYSTEMS AND METHODS

In its systems and methods, even more than in its structure, public administration in India reveals a vast area calling for reforms.

##### *Office Size and Environment*

The first thing that officials, who had retired from government service prior to independence, would notice, if they were to return to their posts now, would be the vast increase in the clerical establishment of the offices. To some extent no doubt this is due to the enlarged scope of activities of the offices concerned, but principally, it is the result of decrease in productivity, and increasing formulisation of procedures. But whatever be the cause, the fact remains that the large size of these offices poses serious problems of management and organisation. No attention has been paid to accommodation, lighting and ventilation, seating arrangements, sanitation, or canteen facilities. Files are maintained in the most shabby condition, and no care has been bestowed on the question of proper maintenance of old records.

It is not merely that all this leads to the offices representing an unseemly sight. They have a very adverse effect upon the efficiency of the services rendered by the office, with consequent disorganisation of the administration. Naturally, in such circumstances, few staff develop pride in their work and in their office. This could partly explain the fact that clerical staff in government offices not only give poor outturn but are also always dissatisfied. The effect of environment upon the psychology of the worker is one of the things ignored in government administration in this country. It is essential, therefore, that the heads of departments and their officers are made to take an interest in these matters. There should be no great difficulty in overcoming the physical problems of seating, lighting, etc. Government already spends large sums on office buildings, etc., but generally the heads of the offices have no control or say in the manner in which the money is spent, or on the facilities provided. Under the extant rules this is the responsibility of another department, such as the PWD, for whom naturally the problem does not appear in the same light or have the same urgency. If, however, heads of offices and departments are to be made responsible for the physical condition of their offices, some system of vesting them with more real power in these matters will have to be evolved.

#### *Office Procedure and O & M*

But it is not only the physical conditions of the office that require immediate attention. Filing, recording, routing of documents, and handling of correspondence also require to be improved. The procedures at present in vogue are those that were evolved in pre-war and pre-independence years, when the offices were very much smaller in size. No attempts have been made to change and adapt these to suit the altered conditions. To cite an example, it is one of the rules—honoured in the breach—of government offices that record should be maintained, in suitable registers, of the receipt and disposal of all letters—including reminders. This was obviously a good rule when the size of an office did not exceed about forty or fifty clerks, and the inward letters were daily not more than fifty or so. But there are few central offices now, where the clerical strength is less than a hundred—in some they even run to thousands. The volume of correspondence has multiplied even more. The result is that though in theory these registers are still to be maintained and be available for tracing disposal of correspondence—for which purpose alone some offices have even twenty or thirty clerks in their receipt and despatch sections—in actual practice it is found impossible to keep these registers properly posted and up-to-date. (That explains partly why the letters of the public to government departments are quite often reported as not traceable.)

What is required is to reorganise the whole system and methods of working, making use of the various modern techniques that have been evolved, such as forms designs, loose leaf registers, systematised flow of documents, organising of work to manageable proportions, etc. A start was made in this direction by setting up O & M organisations in some of the Central Government offices. But somehow this has not been a success, partly perhaps because these organisations are manned by the existing employees themselves, who are not trained in these techniques, and who do not have much knowledge of the same. It appears that the best course would be to employ outside consultants who should study and deal with each office separately.

#### *Mechanisation*

But the question of the size of the office itself poses a big problem. Beyond a certain size offices become unmanageable; and yet it appears that in many cases the growth in size cannot be avoided, especially where accounting, stores procurement and distribution, and such other functions are involved. Mechanisation seems to be the only solution to the problem, and should be adopted wherever possible. Computers may be installed where the volume and complexity of work justifies it, but there are a number of simpler machines such as addressographs, accounting machines, etc., which could usefully find a place in many offices, without raising the problem of personnel lay-off which computer installation is bound to cause.

### CLERICAL NATURE OF THE ADMINISTRATION

#### *Clerical Strength*

Before leaving the subject of office organisation, a reference has to be made to the part played by clerical staff in its working. It is a remarkable feature of the Indian administration that the base level, which is made up of clerical staff, is very large in comparison with the middle or top levels. In some of the offices the ratio may be as high as 100 : 1 : 1. This definitely gives a clerical twist to the character of the administration, which is not unjustifiably referred to, by the general public, as an administration of clerks.

#### *Office Procedures under the British*

The British rulers had looked upon their offices as mere aids to administration, all policy-making and executive decisions-making being retained in their hands. As the function of the office was purely clerical, including maintenance of records, receipt of petitions and communication of decisions, it was sufficient for their purpose to have only clerks, and a single manager to look to the general management

of the office. They never felt the need for a middle management which could relieve them of some of their executive responsibilities and to whom power could be delegated. It was only in the larger secretariat offices, and for some of the major departments that a few—just the minimum necessary—assistants and deputies were provided at the level of officers. This does not mean, however, that the clerks and the office managers did not exert any influence in the administration. On the contrary, they wielded indirect power on a scale vastly out of proportion to their official status. This they were able to, because the British officials, being strangers to the land and its social life, and not being able to come into contact with all the phases of life over the vast areas that they ruled, had to take them into their confidence, and be guided by them in many matters, especially appointments, distribution of grants and favours, and so on.

#### *Notings*

The post-independence policy in regard to the administrative organisation was, as already explained, to effect no changes in the forms but merely to add on staff wherever necessary. Consequently, while the clerical strength began to be augmented in large numbers—and the officers' cadres to some extent—the middle management has been very much neglected. The clerks grew in strength, and where they had previously wielded power only indirectly, they have now begun to take an active and open part in executive decisions. It is not that any formal authority has been vested in them, but it is a development arising out of the new methods of working. In an effort to rationalise procedures and to minimise the personal bias in administrative decisions, a vast code of rules and regulations have been built up, and innumerable procedural instructions laid down for everything. It is only the official who has been in the same office for a number of years who is familiar with the particular rules, regulations and instructions which affect his work. He is also the only one who is aware of the history of the cases handled by him—since cases take years to settle. Moreover, only by a long tenure of his office can he know the precedents which have a bearing on the cases that come to him—and in public administration, precedents are as important as rules. Officers are moved from post to post frequently, and, compared to them, the clerks' tenure in an organisation is very much longer. This gives them a clear advantage, in that they are the only people in the office familiar with all the relevant rules, regulations, procedures and precedents. Hence, it is they on whom falls the initiative for dealing with cases. The normal procedure in any public office in India today when a letter is received is to hand it over to the clerk concerned, who initiates the long tortuous process through which it has to pass before final disposal, by writing a 'note',

in which he quotes the relevant rules affecting the case, the precedents, if any, various alternative courses of action available, and the arguments for and against them. Though the decision on the 'note' lies with the higher officers, they are more or less guided by it. The 'note' then moves up the executive ladder, rung by rung; no rung is to be skipped in this ritual—with scarcely any one recording any dissent on it—till it reaches the authority considered competent to order 'action as proposed', as the officialese goes. Thus the clerk, that is to say the lowest official in the rung, rules finally, and higher officials often bemoan their helplessness, saying : "What can I do ? The office note was like that; how could I do against it!" And that is why the public find it easier to get things done in the government offices by going to the clerks, rather than to the higher officials, who in any case have themselves to turn to the clerks.

#### *Baneful Clerical Influence*

There is no doubt that clerks play an unduly large part in the administration. The evils of such a system are obvious. It gives great scope for corruption, as the low paid official finds himself exercising great power. Besides, the outlook and attitude of the Administration becomes narrow and petty, which is not surprising since the clerks cannot be expected to have any great breadth of vision. And above all it results in a demand for more and more clerks who tie the whole administration up in red tape. It also means a very large amount of paper work, and of writing of 'notes', memoranda and aide-memoires on even the merest trifles. On the slightest excuse, and often with no excuse at all, it is considered necessary to consult, and so refer paper to, other offices. Ability to 'note' and 'draft' is considered an important and valuable qualification for promotion and advancement in the administration.

#### *Acceptance of Personal Accountability*

It is of the utmost importance, therefore, that the baneful influence of the clerks should be destroyed. The first step in this direction would be to rule that the function of clerks in offices should be the merely routine ones of maintaining files, receiving and despatching letters, etc. Executive action on cases should be initiated only at the officers' level who may have one or two personal staff attached to them for that purpose. The junior officers should be trained to acquire self-confidence, and to act as middle-management, fully responsible for the less important executive decision. There should ordinarily be no need for cases to pass through more than two rungs of the hierarchy before final disposal. Personal responsibility of officers for the work allotted to them, and the cases dealt with by them, should be recognised. A basic

condition for improvement is the simplification of rules and procedures, including the rules for regulation of pay and allowances. Simple pay codes should be evolved.

#### *Delegation of Powers*

The rules for the delegation of financial powers to officials are at present very deceptive. On the face of it, the delegation chart read as if substantial powers are delegated, but actually these are qualified by procedural rules which lay down strict and detailed instructions regarding the manner in which the expenditure, e.g., on purchases is to be incurred. The delegations are, therefore, often formal rather than effective. It is necessary that these restrictions should be removed. It is only by reforms of this nature which would have the effect of vesting real power in the executive that accountability can be secured. As it is, responsibility for the administrative shortcomings is very often at present difficult to determine. When things go wrong it is not the personnel who are corrected, but the rules which are further elaborated, and so the rules and red-tape grow, and the importance of personnel in administration is forgotten.

### CONTROL AND COMMUNICATION

#### *Two-way Communication for Control*

One of the reasons why administrative offices employ a large number of non-technical staff out of all proportion to the field staff, and why technical staff have to devote so much of their time to non-technical aspects of their work—and feel frustrated by the petty controls to which they are subjected by the administrative staff—is because the concept of control is not properly understood by the administration. For good administration it is important that the central office which co-ordinates all activities should issue instructions and directives to the lower formations and field staff. But good guidance is possible only if the controlling centre is provided regularly with information on the progress of work with the end of which it can control, modify and direct the activities of the whole organisation in the best way possible to achieve the objectives. A good two-way system of communication is therefore essential if control is to be effective.

#### *The Technocrat and the General Administrator*

But efficient control is not possible unless the controlling authority has also the necessary technical knowledge. Otherwise, control becomes purely formal and more concerned with procedures than with the substance matter of the work. This is what is happening at present in the Indian Administration. Officials exercising central control being

with few exceptions generally non-technical people, the field technical officers feel frustrated at the amount of petty, non-technical information that they are called upon to furnish, and at the lack of interest in the actual progress of the work shown by the administrative officials. The most glaring example is the number and nature of the periodical reports which are required by the ministries and the Planning Commission. Indeed the way the Planning Commission has grown, and is functioning at present furnishes the best example of the dangers of continuing with the old ideas of organisations. It has become a huge body of officials, almost a super-government having a say even in the day-to-day work of all the important offices, to which vast volumes of periodical reports and reviews flow from all directions, but which nevertheless does not appear to have the ability to give effective direction to the economy. This is not to advocate that administration should be handed over to technocrats for that would not improve matters either. The executive function is a specialised technique, and the technocrat is not better qualified to discharge these functions than the 'general administrator'. Both require to be trained in these functions.

#### *'Line' and 'Staff' System*

A system of organisation that would be more suitable for this purpose than that traditional in this country is the 'Line' and 'Staff' type, now commonly in operation in the advanced countries of the West, and which follows the organisational pattern in the army. In this system the executives in the field are the 'Line' staff and the chief of the 'Staff' is an administrator who is assisted by a number of functional assistants who are specialists in the field, and who have only a small group of personal staff attached to them. It may be worthwhile experimenting in this type of organisation in this country.

#### THE DISTRICT COLLECTOR

There is one particular official in the administration on whom falls the major responsibility for translating all the new policy and planning into executive action for the mass of the people. That is the district collector. Traditionally he is the fulcrum round whom the civil government revolves, and that he still continues to be. But he is no longer the law and order and revenue-collecting official of old. He has now in addition become responsible for the implementation of Development programmes, and for all the Plan activities in the Districts which are simply tagged on to him as they arise. Some relief has been no doubt provided by creating posts such as additional collectors. But the slow progress in the transformation of the countryside makes it obligatory to enquire now whether the collector need necessarily be

closely associated in all these plans, and whether new organisations could not be evolved for this purpose. This, however, is a problem which requires a careful examination by government with the aid of experts in the matter. Like the Justices of the Peace under the Tudors in Great Britain, the district collector in India is 'a maid of all work'. This costs too heavy a burden on him which he is not at present able to deal with satisfactorily, for the work is too large and too varied. He is in theory responsible to too many people, but in practice his responsibility is so diffused that it is his own personality, taste, and inclination which decide the amount of attention he is prepared to pay to the various aspects of his work.

#### FINANCE AND AUDIT

##### *The Nature of Financial Control*

The part which the finance wings and the audit department play in public administration is very peculiar indeed. The formal function of these two branches is perhaps no different from their counterpart in other countries. But it is generally conceded that at every stage of the administration's functions the shadow of these two departments looms very large, and their scrutiny of work is very close due to the innumerable financial rules and regulations. The complaint is that this hinders progress of work, and that the frequent inquisitions result in the executive being afraid of taking responsibility and initiative in their work.

##### *Financial Rules and Regulations*

There are various criticisms of the financial rules. The first is that they are too many, too tortuous and too much concerned with petty matters of finance, neglecting the broader and more important questions. The rules governing pay, allowances, leave, etc., the so-called Establishment Finance, are so meticulously drawn up that the trouble involved in applying them does not appear worthwhile at all. So much ingenuity has been shown in seeing that they confer as little benefits as possible, that almost all staff nurse a grievance against them. The second and equally severe criticism is that the language in which these rules are framed is so tortuous and involved that few people can understand or apply them easily. The result is that their interpretation and application has become the secret lore of small groups of petty officials not only in the Ministry of Finance, but in the finance wings of the office all over. These officials are like priests dispensing esoteric knowledge, with the Ministry of Finance sitting like Archpriests beyond whom there is no appeal.

In other matters also the financial rules are old and outmoded.

The present procedure for receipt and accountal of government revenue is rather primitive; and government ought to make more use of modern banking organisations for this purpose. The rules for recording and accounting expenditure on engineering works, for instance, are detailed and restrictive. They were drawn up at a time when the scale of such expenditure was very much less than at present. Their main objective was not so much to see that the finances were fully and productively employed, as to see that such expenditure was kept down to the minimum, and to prevent frauds and irregularities by prescribing cumbersome rules for the drawal of funds and for the passing of vouchers. The delegation of financial powers was also very rigidly drawn up. All contracts and purchases are to be effected through tenders, the rules governing which are so meticulously drawn up as to deprive the executive of initiative and judgment in the matter. The rules seem very often to be framed not so much to protect financial interests as to satisfy some moral requirements. The executives are required to judge the capability of contractors and suppliers within the framework of these rules rather than by other technical factors. This is one of the main reasons for the slow progress of government works, and for the frequent disputes with contractors and purveyors of material.

#### *Audit*

The role of the statutory audit is also felt by the executive to be very restrictive. It is true that the function of audit is merely to bring to the notice of the concerned higher authorities, namely, the government, and the legislature—and through them to the public—the extent to which the aims and purposes for which public funds are provided are being observed by the executive. In actual practice, however, audit plays a very important part in setting the tone of the administration, as the Public Accounts Committee, with the audit report as its guide, conducts searching inquiries into the executive's activities. Through the medium of the Report of the Committee which is placed before the legislature, and is made public, officials can be castigated and directives issued to government. The attitude of audit therefore indirectly shapes the conduct of the administration, and if audit sets more store by the procedural rules and regulations, rather than the substantial achievements—as it is very often felt to do—then the executive are bound to pay greater observance to these rules than to the progress of their works. There is, it appears, a need to make the critics of the administration appreciate that too much insistence on a rigid observance of rules is bound to be harmful in the long run. Except where serious irregularities of a fraudulent nature are concerned, the only ground for criticism of executive decision should be its resultant success or failure, and not what might have been the result if a different decision had been taken.

The taking of an executive decision is an individual trait. It is an art of which not all seem to be capable. There is no way of standardising procedures for arriving at correct decisions, in spite of all the modern tools of operation research. Excessive criticism purely on formal grounds is, therefore, bound to result in executive paralysis. The problem of making audit constructive and helpful is an extremely difficult one whose solution requires a sympathetic understanding between the auditor, the executive and the legislator.

#### BUDGET AND ACCOUNTS

##### *Budgetary Control*

The forms of budget and accounting also require to be reformed. Legislative control over government finances is conducted department-wise, through what are called demands for grants and appropriation accounts, and the system is so organised as to lay more emphasis on the provision of funds than on the manner in which they have been utilised. Thus government budget is not so much a tool for seeing that funds are productively used, as to see that the executive do not incur expenditure irregularly or without funds. Moreover, the limited and short periods for which funds are provided makes long-term planning and organisation of projects and schemes difficult. Indian budgeting techniques are old and outmoded. They have not adopted modern techniques, such as planning and performance budgets, which provide neat techniques for government budget being used as an effective tool in implementing social and economic development plans.

##### *Accounting Organisations*

As regards the organisation for accountal and disbursement of funds, till recently the executive had no control over the organisation, except in the railways. Recently steps have been taken to vest the responsibility for this in the executive, but the separation scheme, as this is called, has been extended so far only to a few offices. Large sections of the administration are still outside the scheme. The Accountants-General in the States, for example, through maintaining the accounts of the State Government and disbursing their expenditure, continue to be under the control of the Comptroller and Auditor-General. In all these matters, reform is urgently called for.

#### PERSONNEL FACTORS IN ADMINISTRATION

##### *Quality of Personnel*

It has to be realised that good administration does not consist merely in drawing up properly structured organisations, and well-thought

out systems and procedures. People are required to run the Administration and it is the quality of the personnel which ultimately gives it not only success or failure in its endeavours, but also its moral character. A good society cannot be built by an administration whose personnel are themselves lacking in moral fibre, or technical efficiency.

#### *Effect of Sharing Political Power*

Amongst the moral tests to which officials of the public administration are frequently subjected the most important is the corrupting influence of power. Administration is the tool by means of which political power is exercised in society. Accordingly, the top administrative official has to work in close association with the persons in whom the power is vested, and to whom he has to act as an adviser and consultant in policy-making. In such circumstances, the administrator is always under temptation to submit his will and intelligence to the political rulers, and the relationship is put to further strains in democracies where the rulers change from time, and the administrator is called upon to change his loyalties accordingly. Fear, personal interest and the desire to share in the politician's power often turn the administrator, into a yes-man and a toady. This has disastrous consequences not only to the administration but even to the country as a whole. The administrator instead of exercising his mind independently and submitting his opinion without fear to the minister, now takes care to say, and do, exactly what would please the politician in power, which naturally is what serves the politicians and not the country. In the last twenty years this sort of thing has become quite common in the country, and even the famed ICS has been found to be not free from this fault. Naturally this sets a bad example to the lower level officials who copy the mores of their seniors, and expect in their turn, their subordinates likewise to behave in the same manner to them. In this atmosphere officials find it useful to devote their time to keeping their superiors satisfied rather than to attending to the efficiency of their works. That is why official reporting always sounds so complacent, and is so remote from realities.

#### *Promotions and Rewards, Seniority and Merit*

One reason why this is so is no doubt the low level of emoluments in government service, but the system of promotions which goes by seniority and not merit also plays a part in this. In such circumstances, however, good the official may be at the time of recruitment, a few years of service are enough to kill all enterprise, initiative, and even character in him. It may appear that, if promotions are made by merit and not seniority, this problem would be somewhat solved. But in actual practice it does not work that way. The difficulty is that the power

to rule upon the abilities and merit of an official would still be in the hands of his superior, who now becomes more powerful still. Nepotism and favouritism now creep in, and make matters worse. In such an atmosphere it is not the efficient officer who gets rewarded. Rather it may well be that it is he who suffers, because he prefers to be truthful about the way things are in the administration, thus earning the dislike of his superiors. Moreover, officials in power are not happy if their subordinates display abilities and knowledge superior to themselves. Nevertheless, it is essential that as objective a system of adjudging merit and suitable rewarding of it by promotions, special increases of pay, etc., should be evolved. This is necessary for obtaining high quality of personnel.

#### *Discipline and Punishments*

Equally ineffective for the promotion of good administration are the rules for the punishment of inefficiency. The so-called discipline and appeal rules are very cumbersome and prescribe elaborate procedures of charge-sheeting, examination of explanations, inquiries, production of witnesses and of evidence, opportunities for cross-examinations, and so on, before any punishment can be inflicted. Even if any one is prepared to go through all this in order to punish the inefficient, he is daunted at the outset by the difficulties in proving inefficiency in executive decisions and actions. One may succeed in establishing frauds, irregularities, failures in observance of important rules and regulations, but to prove inefficiency as such is an extremely difficult matter, at any rate it is so difficult that it is very rarely attempted. The fact is that we cannot look to the discipline and appeal rules to improve efficiency in administration. But even for the limited purpose which they can serve, namely, that of weeding out and punishing the lazy and the habitual wrong-doers, the rules require to be simplified.

#### *Gerontocracy*

Promotion by seniority leads inevitably to the more important posts being occupied by elderly men, who generally reach these august positions when they have well passed the prime of life, and are no longer in a position to entertain new ideas, or to look with favour upon changes in the administration. Indian society is a conservative one where old age by itself is given special respect and regard. This is so different from the western societies where men are encouraged to reach the top of their professions before they attain middle age, so that the society is always full of new ideas and progresses by constant change. The grip of gerontocracy over the Indian administration should be relaxed, and young men should be given every opportunity

to reach the highest posts before old age saps their energies. One way of achieving this is to provide for retirement early, that is prematurely, if officials stagnate too long at any level, as is done in the defence services. This would clear the line for younger and more able officers to be promoted to key positions. As it is, Indian officials hang on to government jobs even long after the superannuation age by getting themselves assigned to various special jobs. This has a very deleterious effect upon the younger men, who in turn develop cynicism and a frustration quite harmful to good administration.

#### *Emoluments*

But it is not enough to provide for reward of merit by giving wide opportunities for promotion. It is also necessary to see that the public servants are properly remunerated. Prior to independence, when there was little industrial development in the country, government officials were generally well-off in comparison with the other professions. The position is, however, very much different now. The higher officials especially find the income very much less than their counterparts in industry and the professions. There is a general feeling of frustration amongst this class of officials, and many even prefer to quit government service without waiting to serve their full term. This dissatisfaction has increased due to the continuing fall in the value of money. Inflation has eaten into their resources and has impoverished them. Not only has their current income lost its value, but their scope of saving sufficient amount for their retired life has completely vanished. The future indeed is gloomy. It is very essential for good administration that these grounds for dissatisfaction are removed. Where salaries cannot be raised to meet increased costs, arrangements should be made to supply to the staff essential consumer goods at reasonable rates. This may raise a public clamour that the public servant is being specially favoured, but what the public has to understand is that national progress and development are not possible without good administration, and that it is folly to expect poorly paid and dissatisfied employees to make good administration.

#### *Isolation from Public Life*

It is often argued that attractive service conditions by themselves may not produce sufficient zeal and enthusiasm in the employees as to make them serve the country with whole-hearted interest. There is, it must be confessed, some truth in this observation. Even when their emoluments were, when compared to the general level in the society, fairly high, public servants had exhibited deplorable apathy and disinterestedness in their functions. By the very nature of their duties they have to isolate themselves from the general public life of the country

and to be scrupulously disinterested in the exercise of their authority. Their outlook consequently becomes narrow and they even get out of touch with the great developments in the world outside their offices. This often makes them self-opinionated, petulant and even querulous. A system whereby public servants especially in the higher grades are periodically required to return to the universities, or even to serve in the private industries, would very much help to remove these oddities. A constant exchange of personnel of this nature is a common feature of the American administration, and attempts are being made to adopt in UK also.

### *Corruption*

Of the charges levied against the public servant from the moral viewpoint the most serious is that of corruption. By corruption is meant not merely illegal gratification, but any form of advantage obtained by the exercise of his official powers to which an official is not entitled. It is extremely doubtful if there has been any public administration which, to some extent or other, was not tainted by practices of this nature. Hence it would not be surprising if some corruption did exist in the Indian administration also. But in spite of the various enquiry commissions that have gone into the matter, and in spite of all the special inquisitorial bodies such as the special police establishment, and the various vigilance organisations, that have been appointed to expose corruptive practices, no evidence has been forthcoming of such large scale corruption in the services as to cause serious alarm. But that there is some corruption, especially at the lower levels, there is no doubt. It appears that the scarcity of goods in the country combined with the various regulatory measures, such as import and other types of control, rationing, foodgrains levy, customs and income-tax, etc., has placed much temptation in the way of those to whom the administrations of these controls have been entrusted. There is always this danger when there is too much dragooning of society. The best way of meeting this situation is to see that conditions develop which obviate the need for such regimentation. Like many of the other moral evils in society, corruption in administration is the result of poverty and economic backwardness, and the only satisfactory way of combating it is to improve the social and economic condition of the country. In any case, the administrative measures already taken, namely, the appointment of various investigating bodies, and the punitive provisions of the legislative enactments, vest sufficient powers in the executive. More is not necessary, nor would it be advisable. A vigorous application of these powers is all that can be advocated. Moreover, administrative corruption cannot be completely eradicated unless corruption of ministers and politicians in power is also eradicated, and that is a

matter beyond the scope of mere administrative reforms.

### REFORMS : PRIORITIES, CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY

#### *Need for Reforms*

The administrative organisation is a tool for conducting the economic and political affairs of the society in a disciplined and orderly manner, and for effectively achieving social and economic progress. Like all tools it has to be shaped to suit the environment in which it operates, and the nature of the material which it has to handle. The environment and the material are continuously changing, and if administration is to serve its purpose it has to continuously adapt itself to these changes. Moreover, it is not feasible to lay down a blue print for a perfect administrative system. Nor is such perfection achievable pragmatically. But what is practicable is to improve on the quality of an existing administration by exercising a constant and vigilant watch over the areas of deficiency, and effecting a timely change wherever necessary. There always is a need, and scope, for reforms in any administration.

#### *Critical Stage in India*

A good administration is, therefore, one which, like a cybernetic machine, constantly adjusts itself to the changed circumstances as and when the need arises. Unfortunately, however, in practice such flexibility is not observed, and operational problems are allowed to accumulate till a crisis develops when the requisite changes can only be implemented by major reforms, causing thereby a social convulsion. This is the situation in which public administration in India is at present. Having failed to effect changes internally as necessary from time to time, it has now become necessary to impose these reforms from without.

#### *Difficulties of Indicating Priorities*

It is easy enough to analyse and indicate the areas of public administration where reforms are urgently called for. In its organisation, its systems, its ideologies, its techniques, its personnel, in almost every aspect of its working, the Indian administration is found to be outmoded. Vast and varied reforms are necessary. There are so many deficiencies of a serious nature that it is difficult to lay down any order of priorities. The situation calls for a strategy of a simultaneous war on all fronts. Fortunately, there are strong enough forces in the society with sufficient resources to conduct such a totalitarian war. Government is strong and stable, and the people though not the mass— are conscious and demanding. The administrators themselves are

aware of the need for reforms, and there are many nuclei of highly-trained officials who could serve as the centres of change. Above all the level of education and intelligence in the country is high enough to provide the necessary personnel.

#### *Priorities*

Nevertheless, a statement of priorities may serve a useful purpose in implementing the necessary reforms. Like a battle order, this would help in formulating tactics, and in executing them. In any case such a statement would be necessary in order to supervise the implementation of the reforms and to gauge the success of the endeavour.

#### *Organisational Structure*

The organisational structure is the framework of the administration, and its improvement may well be considered as a basic requirement. It is, as already explained, in the three spheres of State enterprises, centralised planning, and community development, that innovations are called for. The practice of grafting them on to the existing set-up has adversely affected their functioning. The organisation at the district level for schemes to develop grassroots democracy should be less paternalistic than it is in the existing arrangement, which places it under the district collector, the Indian "Maid of all work". Geographical deconcentration, and effective delegation of powers are other necessary structural changes.

#### *Systems and Methods*

Simultaneously, great changes in the systems and methods, the warp and woof of administration, are called for. Techniques of office procedures and management and of control and communication are required to be improved. The baneful influence of clerks and of 'Notings' should be eliminated. Attention should be paid to environmental factors of office work. Rules and regulations should be simplified.

#### *Finance, Budget, Audit and Accounts*

Financial control, budgeting techniques and accounting procedures should be modernised. Administration requires to be free from the crippling effect of audit as at present conducted. These, no doubt, are innovations, and can well give precedence to others in any system of priorities. But there would be no difficulty in carrying them out at the same time as the others.

#### *Personnel*

But the personnel factors in administration call for attention more

urgently than budgeting and audit. Staff require to be trained in modern techniques of administration, and also to be given re-orientation courses. There should be a satisfactory system of incentives, and rewarding of merit. Emoluments should be attractive, and should not be allowed to be eaten into by monetary inflation and spiralling prices. The higher grade of civil servants should be encouraged to develop a spirit of independence and to offer their advice to ministers freely and without fear. The extant powers to root out corruption should be rigorously applied ; they are sufficient for the purpose and do not require to be augmented.

#### *Ombudsman and the Open Administration*

It is only after reforms have been effected in organisational structure, systems and methods, and personnel matters, that the time would come for the setting up of independent, quasi-judiciary organisations such as ombudsmen, for attending to public grievances. Otherwise, the work of ombudsmen would become unmanageable due to the enormous number of cases that would come up before them. Similarly, the appropriate time for legislative enactments providing for people's right to have information is after the other reforms. A premature introduction of a system exposing the entire administrative processes to a detailed public scrutiny may well result in the administrators becoming more chary of taking decisions, thus leading to further inefficiency instead of improving matters.

#### CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it may be stated once again that the art of administration consists in seeing that problems do not develop into crises. Good administration requires good anticipation. Foresight and ability to assess human nature are essential qualities for successful administration. Men with such gifts are difficult to come by. It is all the more necessary, therefore, that efforts are made to find the few that are available, and to place them in charge of the key posts from which they could guide the administration along proper lines, building up the organisations on correct principles, laying down the right systems, choosing the men best fitted to do the various jobs, training them and infusing into them the necessary motivations. Setting up of such cells in the administration would be a far more successful way of keeping the administration trim, than a spate of reforms attempted only when matters have developed into a crisis.



# Implementing Administrative Innovations and Reforms\*

K.N. Butani

THE FOCUS of this article is meant to be, not the need of innovations and reforms or how to activate the formulation of innovations and reforms but the implementation of innovations and reforms in administration. However, the urges and processes that produce innovations are so essential an ingredient of the implementation process that it would be difficult to deal with the latter without, at least to some extent, also touching upon the former.

The crux of the innovative process, as so aptly put by Edward A. Kieloch in his article†, is the 'perception of a problem'. A problem must first be perceived before the 'search' for a solution begins. I would like to add the word 'real' to 'perception' and restate the proposition that the urge to innovate must be preceded by a *real* perception of the problem. So often one encounters situations where a lot of helter-skelter activity is generated to solve administrative problems of which there is no real and genuine perception. The activity starts with an 'order' because a situation arises which vaguely indicates the existence of an administrative problem for the solution of which something is 'desired' to be done. Neither the person from whom the 'order' emanates nor the recipients of the order *really* perceive the situation as a problem-situation. At best a half-hearted acceptance of the need to do something about such a situation results in an equally half-hearted burst of activity which leads to half-hearted measures for reform. In the ultimate no such reforms get implemented or can get implemented because no one really perceived the existence of a problem and, therefore, really felt the need to solve it. Every such situation throttles any innovative urges that may exist here and there.

The crucial question in the matter of administrative innovations and

\*From *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XII, No. 3, 1966, pp. 612-17.

†Edward A. Kieloch, 'Innovation in Administration and Economic Developmnet', *Indian Journal of Public Administration*, Vol. XII, No. 3 July-September, 1966, pp 599-611.

reforms, and their implementation, is not so much the development of appropriate techniques or abilities but the creation of an environment in which such activities can flourish, and the appropriate environment is created by appropriate 'attitudes' of men who matter most in administration—men who occupy positions in the administrative hierarchy from where the consequences of good or bad leadership flow out and permeate the entire structure. There are not many amongst those who occupy such key commanding positions in administration who really believe that administration suffers today from a deep-rooted malaise which cannot be cured by deft touch here or there. On the other hand, there are many who really view attempts at administrative innovation and reform as amateurish incursions into a field of activity in which tradition and experience has so safely entrenched them as custodians of an infallible administrative order. On this question of attitudes, Urwick made a significant statement in his 'Elements of Administration' when he said: "There is a very general feeling that to be hazy and opportunist about organisation is in a somewhat mysterious way 'practical' while to draw up appropriate charts and procedures is somewhat 'theoretical'." While we may have moved somewhat from a situation where we scoffed at organisation and procedure charts, we certainly do not seem to have gone far enough in the field of analysis of what these charts portray in the matter of administrative efficiency and what possible answers can be found to improve this.

It is not the suggestion that the totality of key men in administration present the same impervious attitude to a scientific approach in administration. There are some who keep PERT charts on their desks and, what is more significant, use them in administrative decision-making. But there is a vast majority of others who believe, and believe sincerely, that 'all is well with the world'—at least the Indian administrative world—and that nothing much really needs to be done. The result—a pathetic but persistent and inviolate faith in the efficacy of the fundamental, the supplementary rules and what they connote in terms of attitudes for the conduct of human affairs which today have far outstripped the bounds of comprehension of an administrative system moulded in the colonial framework to maintain the 'status quo' as it existed before the advent of political freedom.

In this respect innovations in the administrative field are much more difficult of acceptance and implementation than innovations in the technological field. The advantages that can accrue from the adoption of technological innovations are so patently manifest in most cases that unless there are special circumstances or restrictive practices inhibiting the adoption of such technological innovations, these innovations evoke, by and large, a much more favourable response. Also it is much easier to adapt and adopt technological innovations made in other countries without having to go through the process of inventing them than it is

with administrative innovations because the latter are much more linked with the socio-political system of a country and therefore, do not permit of such easy adaptation.

So much about the importance of attitudes at key positions in the administrative hierarchy in promoting administrative innovation and reform. But we are concerned, in this article, more with the process of implementation. We shall, therefore, assume that proposals for administrative innovations and reforms are in the process of formulation. What then are the essential requirements of an implementing machinery which could ensure that such proposals for administrative innovations and reforms get implemented with speed and effectiveness ? That, now, is the question.

The first essential requirement is that those on whom the ultimate responsibility for implementation will rest, should be got involved, as early as practicable, in the processes leading to the formulation of proposals for reform. This involvement is very essential and is often overlooked. This will give a sense of participation in the process of reform to those who have to carry the burden of implementation and to that extent facilitate the process of implementation, because involvement in the process of formulation of reform proposals will, to some extent, result in a commitment to reform. It will also provide the needed ballast to the innovative aspirations of the zealots who might otherwise tend to make the formulation of proposals for reform the end objective of their endeavours without regard for their ultimate fate in the process of implementation. The so-called 'practicability' could thus be ensured. *Vice versa* the participation of the 'implementors' in the reform process might infect them, to some extent, with the ardour and zeal of the 'innovators' and thus reduce to some extent the hiatus between the two. The importance of ensuring this cooperative character of the exercise cannot be over-emphasised. It is disregard of this requirement that often leads to the two—those who advocate reform and those who have to implement the reform—assuming intellectually hostile positions.

The second essential requirement is the establishment of an adequate agency for follow-up action. Often, worthwhile recommendations, included in regular administrative or other reports get lost in a multiplicity of considerations in unreceptive organisations. And the fate of Special Committee or Commission Reports on this subject is not any better. This is as much due to the non-participative procedures adopted in making the proposals for reform as due to the apathy in the organisations concerned for follow-up action. To some extent, this situation could be corrected by establishing a follow-up agency charged with the responsibility of ensuring that such recommendations are considered in right earnest at the appropriate levels in the concerned organisations and given a fair try for implementation. Its watchfulness should not end there. It should also be concerned with a review of the results obtained by such implementation.

At the same time, any such recommendation as is found impracticable to implement should be so reported to this agency with the reasons 'why' and it should be the responsibility of this agency to examine the matter afresh and not let it rest till either the earlier recommendation is withdrawn or modified or in the alternative an indication given to the organisation concerned, 'why' and 'how' the recommendation needs to be accepted and implemented. The establishment of such an agency for follow-up action will serve a very useful purpose. First and foremost, it will make manifest the seriousness with which government views the improvement of administration. For this purpose, the agency should be established directly under the Prime Minister. It will also establish a two-way communication between those who periodically report on administrative performance and make recommendations for its improvement and those responsible for running the organisations and for implementing these recommendations. This dialogue will enrich both.

The third, and perhaps the most important, requirement arises from a deep-rooted human factor. This relates to the response to the call for improvement. Unless the urge to improve comes from 'within' or the call for improvement generates this urge, no lasting improvements can result. And this applies to organisations as much as it does to individuals. The urge to improve administrative performance must emanate from 'within' the organisation and cannot be a matter of compulsive imposition from 'outside'. Each organisation, therefore, must have a built in machinery, not only for implementing administrative innovations and reforms but also for perpetuating in the organisation itself the urge and activity necessary for such improvements. The scope for improvement is unlimited and eternal. As is said in most literature on Methods Study, there is no such thing as the best way of doing things; there is always a better way. Special committees or commissions set up for periodic review of administrative performance are alright. They perform an immensely useful function in highlighting major areas of reform. But there is a vast area of administration which cannot be covered by such committees and commissions and which necessarily has to be tackled day after day, by these internally established innovative units.

It might be argued that this requirement has already been met in the sense that many organisations, if not all, do have some sort of internal O & M and Work Study units meant for this purpose. Here again, the same lackadaisical approach in the setting up, staffing and working of these units, has been responsible for making them ineffective appendages of an already ineffective apparatus.

This brings us to another basic requirement for the successful implementation of administrative reform and that is the choice and training of personnel meant to undertake this activity, whether in these internal units or the central agency under the Prime Minister or the supporting research

and secretariat units of special committees and commissions. It has long been recognised elsewhere that such men have to be chosen with great care because the attitudes, the dogged and persuasive bent of mind and other capabilities that are required in such assignments are not freely found or developed. In a situation like ours where the acceptance of the need for such an activity has itself to be fostered by the results produced by such men, the need for bestowing care on the selection of personnel for this work becomes all the greater. This has not been done because the activity has not been considered important enough to justify the care in selection. Because of this enough talent is not attracted to this field of activity from such amongst the younger elements as may possess the necessary aptitude for this kind of work. Therefore, there is a case for instituting special incentives to attract the appropriate talent to this important administrative activity. Failure to measure up to expectations in this field should not be made to attract the usual disabilities in future advancement because the capability to innovate can never be a required attribute of successful administrators or managers. Good administrators need not be good innovators. But good work in the field of administrative improvement can and should be singled out for accelerated advancement. Performance in this field is not difficult to evaluate. And so good performance of those who are selected for work in this area should be adequately rewarded to attract talent and also to demonstrate the importance which is attached to this work.

Even after proper selection, a carefully structured course of training needs to be given to such persons to equip them with current practices of administrative analysis before they are actually put on the job. Training, training and more training should be the guiding principle for all attempts at personnel development; and in no field is this need more vital than the field of administrative research. But here again the usefulness of such training is thoroughly impaired by the lackadaisical approach of most of those whose attitudes determine government policy. By and large, mid-career training, is looked upon, particularly, if it involves a visit abroad, as an inessential but unavoidable interlude, to be viewed more as a reward for some good work done than as a means for the development of administrative capabilities of the individual and therefore of the organisation to which he belongs. And, therefore, placement of persons on conclusion of the training programme, displays an utter disregard for effective utilisation of trained men. Perhaps the situation is much better, once again, in the technological field where a person's basic professional qualification, his position in the administrative structure and the mid-career training will all show a large measure of easily recognisable correlation. Thus, for example, it is perhaps, not easy to post an engineer on his return from a mid-career training abroad, in, say, electronics engineering, to an organisation where use is not made of his specific training. The

situation, however, is different in respect of training in subjects such as O & M, Work Study and Administrative Research. Experience so far does not lend support to the belief that such training is viewed seriously. Most persons, on return, are invariably posted for work in areas where no much use is made of the training given to them. It is true that training in techniques of administrative analysis is good in itself and that the training so received would benefit performance of work in whatever field the persons who receive this training, are deployed for work. But, in the initial stages, when such men are not available in the required numbers, this disregard for utilisation of such men in specific organisation units, established for administrative reform, does succeed in creating the impression that there is no enough seriousness about the need for administrative improvement.

These are some of the important requirements for a good implementation machinery, but it needs to be re-emphasised that no lasting results can be achieved unless the attitudes and environment conducive to the maintenance of a constant urge for administrative improvement exist or are created. This is a much more deep-rooted problem than seems at first sight. Spectacular rates of economic growth, high aspirations of technological breakthrough, etc., are only possible if the minds of men responsible for translating plans into action programmes respond to the challenge and deliberately and assiduously foster the scientific attitude in administration which accepts nothing, rejects nothing except on the touchstone of effectiveness to fulfil objectives. Can we do it without an administrative revolution ?

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